NATURE NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS

MADISON CAWEIN

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NATURE-NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS

NATURE-NOTES

AND

IMPRESSIONS

IN PROSE AND VERSE

BY

MADISON CAWEIN

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GENERAL

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To the Memory

OF

GEORGE H. ELLWANGER

TRUE FRIEND AND LOVER AND INTERPRETER OF NATURE,

AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF ESTEEM AND ADMIRATION

153256

Would I could talk as the flowers talk
To my soul! and the stars, in their ceaseless walk
Through Heaven!—and tell to the high and low
The things that they say, so all might know
The dreams they dream, and have told to me!
As Nature sees would I could see!
Then might I speak with authority!—
I stand below and look above,
And see her busy with life and love,
And can tell the world so little thereof.

Oh, for a soul that could feel much less!
Or, feeling more, could so express
The things it feels and their tenderness:
The very essence, the soul of art,
And all the heavens and hells of heart!
Then might I rise to the very peak,
The summit of song, which poets seek,
And speak with a voice as the masters speak.

FOREWORD

WITH few if any changes the contents of this volume, both prose and verse, with the exception of the short sketch at the end and one or two of the poems, have been copied almost word for word from my note-books of many years. They are impressions, ideas, fancies, more or less fragmentary, that struck me at the moment; notes, suggestions, what you will, jotted down hurriedly,—sometimes taking the form of prose, other times that of verse as the fancy moved me,—while wandering in the woods at all seasons, making a record of days extending over a period of some twenty odd years. All the verses and prose-notes contained in the first part, "1883–1886," were written while hardly more than a boy,

between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one and while attending high school.

A number of the verses have appeared in the magazines during the past year or two: several fragments, under the title "Reed Notes," in "The Atlantic"; "Autumn Etchings" in the "Outlook"; and others in "Ainslee's," "Success," "Smart Set," "Lippincott's," "Metropolitan," and "Munsey's."

MADISON CAWEIN.

LOUISVILLE, KY.

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NATURE-NOTES *and* IMPRESSIONS

Nature never did betray the heart that loved her. —
WORDSWORTH.

1883–1886

I HAVE not delved in the ruins of antiquity, nor moralized upon the past, as Byron did, but have kept, or tried to keep, two lines of Keats, two lines of Endymion, forever in mind while writing, and striven to the uttermost to make my lines worthy the text.

❋❋❋❋❋

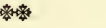
Lead me, thou Bard of Beauty, through those caves
Of pale Diana! let me hear the moan
Of Ocean, sorrowing with all his waves
As once he sorrowed on that Island lone

In siren moonlight. Here, where twilight paves
The woodland paths, I seem to hear her trail
Dim raiment; her, that damsel who enslaves
My soul; that Beauty, sad, divinely pale,
That haunts thy song, mastering the gamut whole
Of dreams and music; on whose easeful breast, —
As once Endymion's head, soft-dreaming, pressed
That Indian maiden's bosom, — rests my soul.

❁❁❁❁❁

O let me sing as thou didst, Keats, and die!
With soul poured on the circling starry night;
When Dian's lune hangs dewy in the sky,
And the wild nightingale with anguished might
Bewails in some dense bramble's spicy dusk
Its old heart-sorrow to the wild rose wan;

Or let me, like thyself, drink in the musk
  Of some dull draught from Lethe's
    waters drawn,
And sink, as thou didst, into dreamless
    sleep,
  Where disappointment, heartache, grief
    and scorn,
And human misery can no longer heap
  The soul that treads life's path set
    round with thorn;
Ay! fall asleep, as thou didst fall asleep
  Under the alien skies, of hope forlorn!



In the forest of music often and often,
To the murmuring song of the winds and
    waters,
Have our spirits mingled and mixed
In the wildflower dance of the Hours
On the mossy carpet under the whispering
    leaves:
Or wandered, hand in shadowy hand,
Beneath the song-suggestive stillness of
    the moon:
Or leaned, listening,
Over deep glens of echoing green,
Carved in the ancient bosoms of the hills

By sonorous and impetuous waters,
Bearing upon their foamy crests
Crescents and points, starry and still,
Of reflected emerald flame,
When the heavens bloomed and blazed
with a million quivering fires.
Dost thou know her name?
Fairest of the Daughters of Music is she,
Loveliest of all the Children of Art.

The puff-ball of the autumn ways is Puck's fat fist thrust threateningly out of the half-concealing weeds at the bee to whom the blossom offers her milk-white bosom.

When winter nights are cold and shrill,
And winds sit rocking wild their arms,
Far off, beyond the treeless hill,
Sound ghostly faint the owl's alarms.
Wail, wail, thou bird of ill omén,
Within thy freezing glen!
Screech, screech through all the frosty
night
Where gleams the cold moonlight!

Well with man's mood thy song accords,
Thy song that knows but wailing words.

Lo, where the oats in barn are housed,
  The screech-owl sits and croons and cries,
Until the cocks are all aroused
  And know to-night some pullet dies.
Hush, hush, thou staring owl!
  And leave the roosting fowl!
Go, seek the shivering wood,
  And there, where wild winds brood,
Sing to the soul that hope has lost,
The soul that still is tempest-tost.

When snows drift deep the forest path,
  And sleet bows down the strongest trees,
Like Edgar's fear and Lear's crazed wrath,
  The screech-owl's voice makes wild the breeze.
Mourn, mourn, thou feathered witch
  Above the frozen ditch!
Weep, weep, unto the icy gale,
  Where icicles hang pale,
As weeps the heart, ingratitude
Makes winter of, the grief pursued.

Like a pearl, dissolving in a goblet of golden wine, is the new moon in the drowning deeps of the sunset.

❀❀❀❀❀

JULY 9

The sea-pink and the tall wild bell-flower divide the honors of July; the one, pearly pink, the other, turquoise-azure, conspicuously placed in her flower-garland in fragrant fraternity, each proud of its showy loveliness and of the abundant beauty of the month that bore them.

Toadstools, large and little, overrun the woods to-day after a day and night of rain: red and yellow and white, green and saffron and gray; upright, sidewise; some with the woodland loam and leaves, upheaved with them, still strewing their tops; graceful and slender, or bloated and distorted they stand; poisonous-looking some of them, and of a blue mottled color, which, when broken, exude

a thin cobalt-colored watery juice that stains whatever it touches; some of them a burnt-umber brown and of enormous size, looking like huge flat hats, rims turned up, swollen with rain, rotting and reeking in the underwoods and filling the air with a fetid fungous odor.

Great clumps of the Mayapples, beaten down and ruined by the rain here and there by the wayside, show the smooth green and ripening yellow of their oval fruit, often too large and heavy for the stalk to support.

The elecampane and the black-eyed Susan, with their frank, wide eyes of gold and bronze; the thimble-weed, with its terminal greenish white blossoms and stiff thyrsus-like thimbles of green thrust from and over the surrounding briers and weeds; and the lacy white of the wild-carrot together with the bugled scarlet of the trumpet-vine, make a perfect riot of

color in an angle of an old worm-fence separating a bit of fallow-field from a bit of sown, wherein a bob-white keeps calling; repeatedly tying, as it were, with a thread of three notes, the stillness and the heat: the first two, soft, careful, and preliminary; the last one, whipped out emphatically, straight as a thread thrust through the eye of a needle, completing and forming the final knot to its own satisfaction and that also of the listening summer day.

Across a wooded vista a red-bird suddenly wings. Its flight is as the swift unfurling of a ribbon of living crimson uniting tree to tree, with a bright bowknot of silken song at either end.

In the careless shadow of a flowering tree she sat — a witch whiter than a windflower. Her song was all of poison, — hemlock, — the squeez-

ing of the dark juice through white fingers. A sound as of owlet wings kept time to her wild singing. At her feet lay a youth with closed eyes, whose lips and forehead she kissed repeatedly, each kiss leaving a mark as of a serpent's fang. He was dead, and yet he seemed to live, his heart and soul, through her kisses, ashes and dust within him. His face was pinched into smiles that were not smiles. She laughed, and beneath her laugh the monkshood and nightshade covered themselves with poison-dripping blossoms, and the wild-rose was slimed with snails.

The spirits of the tempest advance their embattled hosts, thunderous rank on rank, black with their shields of midnight. Beneath the flashings of their terrible helmets and the hissing and rebounding rain of their

arrows, the hills lift up their writhing arms of trees, and the river, foaming with fear, hurls itself headlong at its banks.

❁❁❁❁❁

Twilight with her dusky locks binds up the beautiful eyes of day, whose head she pillows on flaming flowers, — tulip and poppy and rose. Her voice is plaintive as echo's amid the rocks where sleeping waves in dull green mantles lie beneath the caverned cliff; or billows climb, white-shouldered, with long fingers of foam.

❁❁❁❁❁

Here are passion-flowers, purple of heart, bearing the cross, as it were, of some stainless flower-creed; acacias, too, spotless as the angel innocence of a babe, and expressing in fragrance what the poet thinks but cannot say.

Nature-Notes

The roar of winter through the palsied
oaks,
Wind-tortured on the withered fields,
Is as the sound of giant chariot spokes,
And clashing of innumerable shields.

I 've wooed soft sleep all night,
Clothed in her mantle white
And dim as rain;
I 've lain all night and wept
For death, who past me crept,
To still this pain,
Heart's pain, but all in vain.

Why cam'st thou not, O death?
Why cam'st thou not, O sleep?
Death's brother, calm of breath,
For whom I keep
Vigil the long night through:
At last the day breaks blue
And dim the dawn.
Would that you yet might hear,
And hearing me, draw near
Ere night be gone.

The night is wild; the bitter blasts sweep by;
The shrouded snows with ghostly fingers beat
The shuddering casements, and the candle flame
Seems fluttered of phantom lips whose kiss is death.

❁❁❁❁❁

Next to children, birds and flowers are the most beautiful gifts of God.

❁❁❁❁❁

A treasure seems concealed here where the moss is damp and deep, and the golden blossoms of the crow-foot and the wood-sorrel are spilled like little yellow coins.

As I reached up among the blossoming clusters of the elder copse, was it a faun concealed in the boscage who blinded me with a storm of white stars showered into my face, or was it merely the wind that passed, low laughing to itself, and whispering of

forgotten things, lost long ago, and living now only in the land of dreams and song?

With its helm of silver and spur of gold
A fairy knight is the toad-flax bold,
Who takes this form to mortal eyes,
The form of a flower of golden dyes.

By the willow copse near the river shore,
Where the white waves hush their splash and roar,
With an idle sail and an idle oar
I seemed to drift into other streams,
Borne on by the sleepy current of dreams.

O wilding of the young, young June,
That this old rock holds fast,
Thy day is done too soon, too soon,
Too beautiful to last.

Water lily, do the Nisses weave from you their nuptial raiment of white? Or does the enamoured

Necken pluck you for his hair to lure some maiden mortal to his arms? Or the mermaid dew you with her tears when lamenting that she cannot be redeemed? Speak! and with your white, sweet lips now tell me! I know the young Nisses weep because they cannot be saved. Often do I fancy them as seated on your broad green pads, harping and singing sad songs of sad mortality in the light of the setting moon, the vibrant silver of their strings and the hollow gold of their harps sobbing like some wild bird in the silence of the night. And often have you bent your pensive head in helpless meekness, making yourself a bud again, closing the wildness of their music into the imprisoning petals of your beautiful bosom, to give it forth again in perfume.

When all the orchards faded lie,
When roses drop and lilies die,

When fall's full moon makes deep the sky,
Lay me asleep,
Where breezes bend the sighing trees,
Lay me asleep.

When all the dusty autumn day
Is heard the locust's roundelay,
And, dropping leaves, the tree-tops sway
And wildflowers there,
Beneath the wildflowers let me rest,
The wildflowers there.

Let not thy hand disturb the grass
To plant an alien flower there;
Let those wild infants, free as fair,
Above me, sleeping, bloom and pass,
Forgotten die,
Forgotten as myself, alas!
Who 'neath them lie.

❁❁❁❁❁

Gems and crystals lay scattered around him, on marble the color of fire: sea-green chrysoprase and copalite from Zanzibar; spar the color of amber; alexandrines — green by day, by night purple or crimson —

from the Urals; iron, with red streaks of jasper through it; lapis-lazuli and chrysoberyl; fluorspar crystals, white, amethystine, pink and green; cairngorms, dark and clear as an Ethiope's eye; topazes, smoky and blue and wine-colored; and heaped high amid them, like violets smothered under the snows of spring, great sapphires mingled and mixed with the milky fire of many opals.

❁❁❁❁❁

The great stars wax and wane, and the moon rises over gull-haunted crags, honeycombed with caves, in whose dark crevices the yellow mollusks cling like ingots of gold, and upon whose floors of green the red coral is strewn like branches of bleeding ruby.

❁❁❁❁❁

I cannot help admiring the great gray hawk. How bold, how bright,

how swift he is! Let him but show his shadow and the shrieking hens scatter, flying to cover; and the blood-red cock, that braggart of the barn-yard, hides his proud crest in fear.

To-day I found a flower unknown to me, — a flower white as a pearl and spotted with crimson, as if some wild bird, stabbed with a thorn, had breathed its small life out upon the altar of its loveliness.

The moon is a lemon petal,
And the west a wild-rose red,
And the twilight twines her dusky locks
With lily-like stars o'erhead.

Deep down, deep down, deep, deep, deep!
Follow us! come with us! — See how we leap!
Daughters of Æger, veiled white with the spray,
Beckoning, calling you. Oh, come away!

Children of Earth, come hither, where we
Dwell in Ran's realms of cerulean hue;
Where through her caverns of green and
of blue
Echo our songs, our songs of the sea,
Dirging the dead, the sailors who sleep
Deep down, deep down, deep, deep, deep!
Come, where the dulse and the nautilus
cling!
Come away, come away, here where we
sing!
Where of your eyes we will fashion pale
homes,
Hollow, for pearls and the glimmering
foams.

The pale-haired Waves and the white-veiled Billows, daughters of Ran, hurry to meet Æger, King of Ocean, in his helmet of terrifying darkness, amid the roaring reefs and booming breakers. The demons of the deep, armored and helmeted with mist, swarm from the caves of the cliffs, howling to the legions of the

storm, driving some vessel, helpless
and tattered of sail, toward them.

Come, kiss me, beautiful Death,
And lull me with thy wings;
Breathe on me with thy breath,
And touch my soul with things
Unknown of life. Imbue
My body with thy dew
And bear me far away
Into a deeper dawn
Than lights life's shadowy lawn,
Some fairer break-of-day.

Life's sickness, long and old,
Cure in me; everything:
Life's greed for fame and gold
And love and suffering.
Yea, I am young and fair!
Come, take me by the hair
And kiss me on the eyes;
Then bear me through the deep,
As thy brother, dream-tossed Sleep,
Hath borne me loving-wise.

The new moon is the golden battle-bow of a sylph; the evening star is the arrow with which it pierces the sunset.

I saw the Spirits of Day and of Darkness meet. Whiter than the bloom of crystal were his cheeks; and hers, a hectic flush that seemed the reflection of some inward fire, like the scarlet of the autumn woods. To grace her drowsy head he wove for her a chaplet of poppied clouds.

Cheerily rang the bugle horn,
Cheerily through the wood,
For the ten-tined buck by the hunt outworn
At bay 'neath the old oak stood.

The morn, like some blear-eyed beggar, came trailing her tatters in, streaming with vapor, dark and dis-

mal, her sodden hair blinding her eyes.

The noon was clear; but now, as the sun sinks, the broadening black of one tremendous cloud breaks into peaks, creviced and ravined and rivered with burning gold, cascading and circling and cleaving their crags of storm. The thunder seems the sound of its mighty flowing. Nearer and nearer the blue lines of the rain shadow and streak the woods, the hills, and the heavens. Now they plunge, big-dropped, crackling, and resilient, clamoring on the reverberating stones; so thin the film of spray of the shattered drops that the white-tufted dandelion loses not one light seed in the shelter of this rock, where, like a host of fairy helms, the rose bush bristles against the rain a myriad green buds. Again, and yet again, the thunder, breaking, travels ponderously along the clouds, the

gray-steel flash of the lightning like a torch before its rolling chariot.

And now yon crystal mount of clouds
Silvers with light as 't were of wings,
Whose base the thunder's blackness shrouds,
While to its summit brightness clings.

Along the west, flashed through the dun,
Leaping, the angled lightnings fly,
Cleaving the deeps, where thunders run
Like mountain torrents down the sky.

Out of it rises, partly hid,
A cloud, rose-spar, all fair of form,
Like some sky-pointed pyramid,
Or pillar of light, above the storm.

MAY 23, 1885; 6 P. M.

The broad Ohio's darkening stream
Seems now as still as liquid glass,
In which the bridge's pillars dream
Unwavering where the still waves pass.

Nature-Notes

The shattered thunder fragments fly;
  One cloud alone makes dark the west,
Low stooping to the evening sky,
  A champion with a burning crest:

Through whose mailed breast of darkness dim
  And ragged rents of vapors deep,
The sun sweeps lances, long and slim,
  Of flame that fall on vale and steep.

Through stratas torn of windy rack
  Full flashes now its crimson star,
Blazing blood-red through stormy black
  And bronze of tempest scattered far.

MAY 23, 1885; 6.30 P. M.

O wind of eve, what spices, steeped
  In some more aromatic clime,
Thou breathest, — as from islands reaped
  Of Summer, over seas of thyme.

Thou bearest odor on thy breath
  Fresh as the scent of ocean's waves;
Cool as if thou hadst lain beneath,
  All day, in dark and crystal caves.

Night comes, with sparkling fireflies
  Like jewels tangled in her hair,
And all around her perfumes rise
  Of rain, as 't were dim spirits there.

To-day I am like one drifting, drifting, and beholding, as in a dream, never nearer, never farther away, a line of dim shore, cliffed and pined and cascaded, against the sunset's luminous seas.

When eve casts on the day's dark bier
  The rhododendrons of her light,
And trims her stars, like tapers clear,
  At feet and head, how fair is night.

To-day I have learned with Keats "heart's lightness from the merriment" of late summer, instead of "May," and wandered with Shakespeare

"Over hill, over dale,
  Thorough bush, thorough brier,"

and seen many things that the ordinary eye would refuse to consider: the Chickasaw plum, red as the cheek of an Oread; the jellied spawn of the frog in a pond, a flaccid white blotched with black like the freckled face of Caliban; mushrooms, low and leaning, Puck's own footstools; rocks, green with lichen, carved of the rain and frost and heat into fantastic shapes as of rebeck and of rose, fairer to my eyes than any templed frieze of old Greece, where the Amazons and Bacchantes still seem to live in marble; lethargic pawpaws, rotund and jolly as the bottle-belly of old Silenus; and blackberry-lilies, freaked and streaked with rose and ruby, like the hood of Ariel; morning-glories, azure and crimson and crystal, finely fragile, and hung up like the petticoats of the fays, the fairies' own laundry, at the entrance to the wood, that holds in its green heart

many a woodland spring, like a pure thought, framed in with rocks and ferns, — the secret mirrors of glimmering shapes, the sylvan spirits of the solitude.

❁❁❁❁❁

O my Kentucky, forest old!
Where Beauty dwells, the stalwart child
Of Love and Life, where I behold
The dreams still glow that long beguiled

The marble and the bronze of men,
Whose Art made fair the world of old,
Yet never held, of classic ken,
A form like thine which I would mould.

Around me now I turn and gaze:
The earth is green; the heaven is clear:
Where smile the stars, or bloom the days
More absolutely fair than here!

Young still is she, and fresh as morn,
Standing her sister States among;
Ah! would I were a poet born,
To sing her as she should be sung!

Bidding her keep beneath her heel
The lust for wealth, wrong's iron crown;
Her pioneer pride, a shield of steel,
A buckler that no foe may down.

Sister to Hospitality!
Mother of Lincoln and of Clay!
Make thyself worthy still to be
Mother of men as great as they.

Mother of loves and hopes that dare;
Of dreams and deeds that sing and toil,
Whose hands are open as the air,
Whose honor none on earth may soil!

Let mightier dreams be thine! arise!
Let all the world behold thee set
A constellation in the skies
Where all thy sister Stars are met!

1885.

The noisome hollow of the wood was fetid with toadstools. The trees were crippled and swollen with wormy galls, and twisted like tortured things with disease, and dis-

torted with huge fungous growths. Nearby, surrounded with such trees, a rushless and reedless pool lay stagnant and sullen in the sun, where toads and newts and water-snakes abounded, breeding in the rankness of its slime and ooze. The horrible hillside, rising from the pool, was smothered with thistle and nettle and burdock and the evil-smelling jimson-weed; one wild-rose bush eked out a sickly existence amid this army of evils, its stems and leaves leprous with the mining larvæ, and labyrinthed with the web-white trails of the red spider. By the side of the pool, in the shadow of the rose-bush, like some lean yellow spider, or obscene larva, sat a man, hideous and old, with long, straggly gray beard and bristling eyebrows, through which his small eyes glittered like a snake's. Hatless and perfectly bald he sat, — a mirthless, a cruel smile, repugnant and un-

changing, wreathing his wrinkled face, — watching a viper devour a toad.

A distant river glimpsed through deep-leaved trees.
A field of fragment flint, blue, gray, and red.
Rocks overgrown with twigs of trailing vines
Thick-hung with clusters of the green wild-grape.
Old chestnut groves the haunt of drowsy cows,
Full-uddered kine chewing a sleepy cud;
Or, at the gate, around the dripping trough,
Docile and lowing, waiting the milking-time.
Lanes where the wild-rose blooms, murmurous with bees,
The bumble-bee tumbling their frowsy heads,
Rumbling and raging in the bell-flower's bells,
Drunken with honey, singing himself asleep.

Old in romance a shadowy belt of woods.
A house, wide-porched, before which sweeps a lawn
Gray-boled with beeches and where elder blooms.
And on the lawn, whiter of hand than milk,
And sweeter of breath than is the elder bloom,
A woman with a wild-rose in her hair.

How long she had waited! It seemed ages since that morn, blood-shot of eye, arose from the couch of old Tithonos, and she, with kindred eyes of sleepless hours and tears, arose from Mark's hated side.

From her casement she sees the castle lake, lilied and fountained, and far beyond the moated walls the forested mountains where Tristram, it is whispered, runs naked, a madman amid swineherds.

Now sinks the sadder eve, blood-

shot of gaze as morn, over the shadowy bier of day bowing her melancholy star. And so o'er their dead past her sorrowing fancy bends, lit with the light of tearful eyes. Tristram naked and lost among vile men and barren hills and savage woods. Why could she not die! Yes, she would die! To-morrow should not gaze upon her misery, — the misery of Isoud the Beautiful! Why had God cursed her with this great, this sinful love? Yes, she would die. Morn would find her dead, — morn that she loved, — the fresh and radiant morn! Ah! she would miss the oxen's far-off low; the smell of early meadows tedded and deep with hay; the cock's clear clarion call; and under the eaved cottage thatch, as often she and Tristram rode afield, the twittering of sparrows. And, sighing, from the window slow she turned, and took

her lute; touching its strings, she sang:

"No more for me shall gray-robed Dawn look through
Heaven's windows of the fog, or rain, or dew,
The maiden Dawn with eyes of beautiful blue."

❁❁❁❁❁

I saw sweet Summer go
Into a woodland green,
Unto a sliding stream,
A drowsy water;
With cheeks of sunset glow
Dreaming she seemed to lean,
Dreaming a wild-wood dream,
The wood's wild daughter.

She seemed to smile, then weep,
Then lift, then bow her head,
Deep with its golden hair,
Sad as some maiden
Who loveless falls asleep,
Her eyes to sorrow wed,
Her cheeks as wild flowers fair
With dewdrops laden.

Nature-Notes

I heard the streamlet moan;
I heard the wood-wind wail;
I heard the forest sob:
"Summer is dying!"
Whiter she lay than stone,
And down each dell and dale
I heard the wild heart-throb
Of Nature sighing:—

"Come back!—Oh, art thou dead,
Thou, thou my sweetest child?
Come back with all thy flowers!"—
But naught she heeded,
Lying with wild-flowered head
In beauty undefiled,
While 'round her sad the Hours
Bowed down and pleaded.

Then through the woodland there,
With ribbons flying gay,
Mocking at Summer's death
With laughter hollow,
Tossing her gipsy hair,
In Romany array,
Autumn, all wild of breath,
Cried, "Follow! follow!"

Nature-Notes

Is it an iron harp smitten of iron hands? or only the winter wind in the palsied and ancient oaks, Lear-like, that toss their hoary arms on the withered hills? All day, all night, I hear them, rustling, warring, sighing or roaring with the wind, their few last, brown leaves beating their frantic tatters to and fro. The sound of their shriveled sorrow will not let me sleep. An ancient agony seems theirs, older than that which wrings the hearts of mortals.

When the jeweled lights of the fireflies gleam
In fairy revelry;
When the waning moon on the forest stream
Looks down, I love to sit and dream,
To dream her again with me.

We speak of the past; of the things once said;
Of the happiness long gone by;

While one blue star burns bright overhead: —
For sweet it is to talk with the dead,
The dead that do not die.

With the dead that are never far away,
That are even as yonder star,
Whose light the darkness, ray on ray,
Makes visible, viewless all the day
Though shining still afar.

Like a lonely beautiful flower wild
In the limitless lands of space,
That star is, blossoming undefiled;
More beautiful for that loneness, mild
It shines on my upturned face.

'Mid the fairy lights of the fireflies,
In the light of the waning moon,
Born of the grief that never dies,
Into my eyes gaze her dark eyes,
The eyes death closed last June.

And I hear her speak, and I hear her sigh: —
For, the dead — they never forget:
Around my heart her white hands lie,
And she kisses my face and asks me why
My cheeks with tears are wet.

And as in life I clasp her and hold,
And meseems it is no dream —
That here we meet, as oft of old,
When the lights of the fireflies' lamps gleam gold,
In the trysting place by the stream.

❁❁❁❁❁

On autumn eves in the beautiful Indian Summer, sitting wrapt in contemplation of the sunset, the world seems compact of imagination. As the fancy bodies forth, thought gives substance to things, and unrolling the Nubian curtains of night, behold, it is not the sunset that I see, but a sea of gold dotted with islands vermilion as the continents of Mars; their bowers and streams burning rose and pearl, among and beside which, robed in shadowy silver, sylphid shapes wander, — spirits, naked and beautiful as stars, flashing flame-like from the caverns of purple-pinnacled peaks, or leaning from the battle-

mented blue of ethereal cities. Changing, ever changing, now, behold, it is some mainland of isolated heaven, moving in mirage, forested with trees of ruby and silver, oozing and weeping gold and amber into lakes and rivers of gold, from whose crimson banks bronzed savages launch a crescent canoe.

Sleep came to me distilling dews of dreams, within whose diamond spheres an ethereal world lay of thought and scene. Methought that I was dead; that I was drowned; and, in a cavern vaster and bluer than night, before a shadowy presence of hoary foam and weedy shell, the presence of that Ancient of the Sea, I stood; the shadow of whose sceptre huge, a rib of cloudy pearl, lay white upon me. Around him circled and sang the mermaids, chanting that song whose mystery fills — old and

unchanging — the mouths of the murmur-haunted shells of ocean. And, behold! I heard a mermaid tell in song, standing before that throned and ancient presence, how she had stolen and taken on the beauty and the likeness of a mortal maiden and lured with these the maiden's lover to save her apparently from the sea, dragging him down into its green depths. And at the Ancient's feet she laid a body, — wan-faced with wide and ghastly eyes. I looked upon the face — and, lo! the face was mine.

Here follows the synopsis of a poem that was partly completed and afterwards destroyed: —

The gathering gloom of the sea; the revels of Storm and Tempest; the dancing of the winds with the daughters of Æger, the waves, by the wild

torches of the lightning. In the midst of it all, illuminated by the phosphorescent glow of mountainous waters, a barque is discovered, torn of sail, driving rudderless towards, and crashing thunderously upon opposing cliffs of granite, an island in a white whirl of booming surf. The vessel, overwhelmed and engulfed, is borne down, down, down into the wild waters by the daughters of Æger, to be plunged among the piled-up wrecks in the treasure caves of the Sea King.

Dawn. Near the shore of a tropical island a youth lies, awaking slowly from a swoon. His despair on finding himself the sole survivor of the vessel, and cast on a desert island. Wearily, in search of food, he wanders inland. Coming upon what seems to him a beautiful lake, but which is really the crater of an extinct volcano filled with the sea and

connecting with the sea, he seats himself despondently beside it, lamenting his fate. A mermaid rises. Apparently all unconscious of his presence she proceeds to comb her hair, richly auburn as the auburn seaweed, with a comb of pearl, singing a song all the while such as only the shells and the caves of the deep have ever heard before. She sings of the bliss that is in store for all mortals who, weary of life in the world of earth and air, visit the world of waters, and become vassals of the Sea King, deep down in his wonder caves of coral and of crystal. In the ecstasy of the moment, dazed as it were by her chanting, the youth extends her his hand. It is seized instantly in a grasp that he cannot resist even if he desired to; and the creature, changing her song from one of love-longing to one of triumph, drags him, still unresisting, fathoms deep, into the emerald

waters, casting him senseless upon the silvery sands of a coral cavern.

The green glimmer of the sea-cave, broken here and there with purple blurs and shafts of light, on his awakening, shows him where, at the far end of the mighty cavern, on a vast throne of piled-up, wave-welded gold and gems, treasures of wrecked ships, mingled with the skulls and bones of drowned men, looms a shadowy presence, weed-bearded and hoary with shells and pearls, crowned with a crown of ore set round, like gems, with the eyes of the drowned; his sceptre, a broken and mighty anchor of iron and gold. Combing their long locks and circling around him, many mermaids sing. Vast bulks, whales, cuttlefish, and sea-serpents, amorphous monsters of the deep, herds of ocean, pass and repass, driven of mermen from pasture to

pasture of the underworld of waters. Storm and Tempest, chained and manacled with adamantine chains, lie restlessly beneath his throne.

Standing before this terrible presence the youth begs that his love, lost in the wreck of yesterday, be returned to him. The King promises that she will be restored on one condition — that they remain his subjects forever beneath the sea. He consents. His love is brought to him by a mermaid. Pale as a pearl she stands before him, her beauty overshadowing even the beauty of the mermaids.

Gathering gradually, far above, a muttering is heard; a calling, as it were, to the over-deeps. Storm and Tempest rise on their hideous feet, shaking their tremendous chains. Mournful echoes, wave-like and wind-

like, sigh through the glimmering cavern, labyrinthed like a shell: a far, wild sound as of a voice, sonorous and deep as thunder, calling and summoning Storm and Tempest to rise. They strain at their huge gyves, howling to be set free. Æger smites them mightily down, again and yet again, with his terrible sceptre of gold and iron. The voice above seems multiplied into myriad voices, pleading, insistent, importunate. Storm and Tempest rend their chains asunder; the cavern is lashed into furious foam, and the throne is lost in whirling and overwhelming waters. Storm and Tempest reign supreme 'mid darkness and foam and thunder. The lovers borne on the backs of the billows are cast, clasped in each other's arms, naked and cold in death, on the shores of the desert island.

Thus in the dusk as ghosts they met,
Culling the pansy-violet,
The violet of sweet regret
And memory, dim and dewy wet.

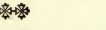
These are not bees, my child, but fairies disguised, seeking the souls of little children in the cups of the wild flowers. There it was, closed in the bud of a wild rose, that they found thine. Therefore is it that thou art so fair and sunny and fragrant and pink. See, as this sweet bud closes in all its perfume, so does thy loveliness contain thy innocence.

In dimly lighted cloisters of the heart
I met with one whose face was like to thine,
The ghost-face of the love that once I wronged.

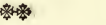
All day the world has swooned with heat. Now, shaking back his

raven locks of storm, lit with the lightning of terrific eyes, comes on the storm.

Amid the summer fields and flowers,
Let us be children for a day,
Where laughter speeds the joyful hours
And drives dull care away.



Keep thou my face engraven in thine heart,
Now that we part;
Forget me not; or if thou dost forget
Hold me to blame,
Who leave thee now, without one heart's regret,
Forgotten even thy name.



One milk-white hand she stretched to me,
My heart sobbed, "O beware!"
But both my arms reached out to her
Despite my soul's despair.

1887-1890

HER soul, after a night of tears, is like a butterfly after a night of rain: attempting to fly, little by little, to rise to the blossoms, the joys above it, as the sun, the warmth of affection, dries the moisture on its wings.

❁❁❁❁❁

Now that the dawn is up, is up,
And your vine drips dewy with cup on cup,
Lean out, lean out, rare Marguerite,
Lean out of your window over the street,
Where Love stands waiting, sweet, for you,
Like a rose 'mid roses wet with dew.

❁❁❁❁❁

Joy, shaking his chubby sides, in a dewdrop of the dawning, laughs at me out of the wild-rose blossoms.

Nature-Notes

From the tears of Cypris (Aphrodite), when she wept over dead Adonis, sprang the purple windflower: and from the tears of love mourning over loss spring the fairest flowers of poesy.

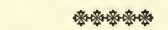
Dark woodland ways of drowsy rustlings
Where, in the road, the clay-red nodules lie;
And where the wild grape, green with clusters, swings,
Dimmer than rain, the cool noon hours steal by.

The thunder boomed from cloudy ridge to ridge,
Trailing the terror of sonorous arms;
Making the lightning for his wrath a bridge,
Planting his banners on the heights of storms.

Who now hath understood,
Whose art may ever reach
The velvet blush of the bud,
The velvet bloom of the peach?

High up she glides, high up, the quartz-white moon,
Tipping the mountains with exultant fire,
And in her light each pine becomes a lyre,
And every wind an Oread-whispered tune.

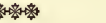
The hope, the hate, the bitterness of love
Were in her eyes that levelly looked at me,
While th' rebel blood went storming up her cheek.
Devil and angel was she in a breath,
Cursing and kissing me whom she wished dead.



Barbaric burgonets, heavy with gems,
And armor wrought of wondrous alchemy,
The Spirits of the sunset don, and sweep,
Vast, cloudy-charioted, along the skies.

Some demon, hidden in the arras, shakes its figured folds; I seem to see

his narrow eyes, two slits of cat-like flame, glaring — or is it the sunset raying a rent with gold?



Thou hast no thought for one who walks
'mid flowers,
Whiling away the humming-bird-like
hours,
Nay, nay, not thou!

Nor think I now of thee who sittest where
The vine leaves wreathe thy beautiful
brow and hair,
Forgotten now.

The fragrance of a dead flower fills this dingle of the forest as the fragrant memory of some beautiful girl, long dead, haunts some old room. Wait a while and we may see its essence take form, as a spirit takes form in the twilight of a haunted chamber.

The pink-blossomed wild mint, hot and pungent as the breath of an oriental harem, and the chicory, odorless blue, paint with patches of opposing color the sparsely treed hillside, whose thin grass, especially around the old and blackened stumps, is hot with the sunlight and the oily-smelling pennyroyal. The September heaven is a vast, a fleckless chicory blossom; a deep and cloudless azure.

❁❁❁❁❁

The bronze-tinted, amber-emerald blur of shadowy daylight that strikes upon and shimmers through the tall, tufted grass of the fallow, mingled with the gold-green budded masses of the goldenrod, is like the light that shines unearthly through some strange, some wonderful crystal, smoky gold and green, cairngorm and chrysoberyl: a vitreous, lunar light like that, I imagine, which glimmers

eerily over the World of Faery, the Land of Gnomes, where forever on the twilighted hills, swiftly and soundlessly, whirls and circles the never-ending dance.

❁❁❁❁❁

The gerardia, frailly hung with its harebell-like blossoms, delicately pink, seems to me too slight a flower for the chill winds of these October days; too slender a life to withstand the icy dews and mists that whiten and drench these October nights. It reminds me of some women, who, slight and delicate, yet are able to stand more than those their sisters who are stouter and seemingly stronger.

❁❁❁❁❁

Thou art to me the whole of heaven,
  Its sun, its stars, its golden moon;
Thou art to me as music given,
  As song that holds the world in tune.

Two unshed tears made beautiful her eyes
Lighting their liquid turquoise sorrowful;
Yet was she false, in spite of all her tears,
And with sin pregnant as the seeds of hell.

❁❁❁❁❁

How shall I describe the sunset at which I am now looking? The clouds, broken and black, are ragged rocks veined here and there with molten and running ore, pooling golden in glittering crevices and edging with ingot flame their opaque darkness.

❁❁❁❁❁

A gerfalcon, peregrine falcon, and tiercelet were usually borne with jesses or leather thongs about the legs; sometimes with a hood and bell. They were then jessed, hooded, and belled. When feeding the hawks were "at prey." The lure was a bunch of feathers toward which the bird was taught to return. It was the custom to slip over the claws of

the young birds a gold or silver ring which could not afterwards be removed.

Thou art the wild falcon of my heart. An untamed eyas, unjessed, unhooded, rebellious. Oh, could I but slip the golden ring, coercing, binding, compelling, upon thy hand, then might I tame thee, wild falcon of my heart!

The *bar-lachi* is a loadstone with which, the gypsies say, one may work charms when one knows how to make use of it. Give a woman a pinch of it, grated, in a glass of water and she will not be able to resist you. Now will I make intimates of the gypsies, and with their assistance seek out this loadstone. Thou shalt yet come to love me as no woman has ever loved before — and I — I will ruin and cast thee aside. May God have mercy upon thee, for I will have none.

All day I have wandered in the woods seeing but two birds; only two birds. Surely these beech trees, bountiful and beautiful granaries of the birds, with arms so full and so abundantly bestowing, should lure myriads into these woods. Is that a fragment of the western glow? — or only the orange berries of the bittersweet, whose pods imprison the scarlet of autumnal sunsets?

Oh, for the gods of the Greeks,
The oaks of Dodona!
For the white-bosomed gods of the Greeks!
The gods whom my fancy seeks
'Mid these woods whence is blown a
Murmur of Naiad creeks; —
Here where this old oak speaks,
To my soul, like a god of the Greeks,
An oak of Dodona!

How often in the old garden, grandmother's garden of oldfash-

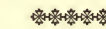
ioned flowers, have you come upon a clove-pink, a clump of heliotrope, a verbena or petunia, the pungent perfume of which excited a hunger, as it were, a desire not only to smell but to taste — to test its quality of flavor!

A languid land of lazy moons and stars
I wander in, watching the ripple bars
Rocking the hyacinths and nenuphars.

The haymakers' sickles
Flash wet on the leas;
The wild honey trickles
From tops of the trees,
The noon is a poppy, the winds are its bees.

She whom I loved too well,
Crowned with the pomegranate bell
Sits empress now in Hell;
And there
My soul sits by her, kissing her eyes and hair.

Tell me, do you love to lie
With the dipping boughs above you,
Where blue glimpses of the sky
Greet you like the eyes that love you?



The dim dawn broke with drizzling rain. The bleached sunflower, weighed heavily with the wet, rotting in the autumn garden, held up by a morning-glory vine, blue with blossoms and hung thick with the dangling aiglets of its seeds, reminded me of decrepit old age supported by sturdy youth.

What gladness of the young, young Earth
Conceived the lily and rose?
What sweetness of her soul's deep thought
Into their fragrance flows?

Maid Marian rose in the morn betime,
Looked in her glass and hummed a rhyme.
I saw her walk by the blossoming bean
Busked in a gown of bombazine.

Look at me over your shoulder, lass,
As you often look in your looking-glass,
And trill to me that merry rhyme,
That rhyme of love and the glad spring-time,
With a fol-de-rol-de-rey oh!

❁❁❁❁❁

Oh, could I only grieve you,
And grieve you more and more!
I who no more believe you,
You, falser than before!
Ah, could I but deceive you,
You, whom I still adore!
Oh! would I were a bee, my love,
And you a wild-rose tree, my love,
I 'd sip the sweets I see, my love,
And be no longer poor.

When apple buds are breaking,
And winds with musk o'erflow;
When wren and thrush are making
Sweet song where'er we go,
The kiss I 'll then be taking
Is the kiss that still you owe.

You who would not have me
Now may not save me;
Now you pursue me,
I will not woo thee:
Love is grown cold;
Love is grown old.

Dim gleam and gloom
And breezy boom
Of wild bees in the mustard bloom
Swoon through the windows of my room,
As if the young Spring trailed her raiment of perfume
Through the old house, rustling from room to room.

Along the west a cloud-wrought crimson cloth
The curtained sunset draws, to which one star
Clings, fluttering silver, like a glimmering moth,
Pale and crepuscular.

What voice is that which wanders in the
wood?
Is it the Twilight murmuring to the hills?
Or, wrapped in mystery of the solitude,
The far-off whippoorwills?

With my whole soul to the soul of her whose perfection I know that I know not, only knowing that I love her more than I do my own soul, I strive to attain to a knowledge of what she is — the unattainable, the divinely beautiful.

What of the sea when the storm clouds
thicken?
What of the soul when its loved hopes
sicken?
Look in my eyes and tell me this, —
What of our lives when our hearts are
stricken,
Given and taken our love's last kiss?

Between the meads of millet
  The soft wind breathes and blows;
Between the meads of millet
  I kissed her mouth's warm rose,
And on her hand I placed the band,
  Where all my future glows.

The Khalif appeared preceded by nearly a hundred eunuchs with drawn swords, and compassed about with a score of damsels, as they were moons about a sun, holding each a lighted flambeau; on each one's head glimmered a crown set with rubies. Mesrour, Afif, and Wesif went before him. Shemsennehar and her damsels rose to receive him. Clapping her hands, slaves with lighted flambeaux and perfumes and essences and instruments of music entered, and Gheram, the sweetest lutanist of them all, smote her lute, singing like a bulbul in the Vale of Cashmere.

A table of juniper inlaid with gems and pearls was set with dishes of silver full of all manner of meats. The table removed, they washed their hands in rose-water, brought by waiting women in castingbottles of mother-of-pearl, from which they sprinkled them, perfuming them then with aloes and ambergris and other perfumes from swinging censers of filigree silver.

After which were placed before them dishes of graven gold, containing all manner of sherbets, fruits, and confections; and a slave brought a flagon of cornelian full of wine of Shirâz. After which they retired to a chamber vaulted on four pillars, as it were the pavilion of Paradise, where ten handmaids and ten singing women awaited them, high-bosomed, of an equal age, with dark and languorous eyes, cheeks like blood-red anemones, and skin like the bloom of

fragrant camomile, joined eyebrows, and hands stained with henna; and these, fair as houris, played and sang and recited verses.

Shemsennehar, scarved with the luxuriance of her dark hair and dressed in a blue robe and a veil of silk embroidered with gold and jewels, about her waist a girdle set with various kinds of precious stones, lay under a canopy of peacock plumes on a couch strewn with roses of Rocknabad. Her words were more enscorcelling than Harout and Marout (two fallen angels employed to tempt men by teaching them the art of magic). And the play of her glances more misleading than Tahhout (an idol of the Arabs before Mohammed). And hearkening her words and gazing into her eyes Haroun reclined near her on a mattress of satin embroidered both sides with gold and quilted with Irak silk;

under his head a pillow stuffed with ostrich down.

❁❁❁❁❁

Eyes were hers pure as crystal drops, and clear as the topaz-colored pools of October forests.

❁❁❁❁❁

Her eyes were dark with the darkness of
hell
And sweet with the sweetness of sin,
And I was a dream of love, they tell,
To her eyes that entered in.

❁❁❁❁❁

Was it Demosthenes who said:

"You write; the scroll remains:
Think, student, what 's to come"?

Would that more writers of the present day would remember this when they set pen to paper, — myself, for instance.

Night came, treading the darkness into
burning stars,
And in my heart waking again old wars.
The shadow of the past lay on my mind's
sick gloom
As on a waste the shadow of a tomb.

❁❁❁❁❁

Here among the autumn fields the stubble, between the tent-like shocks of corn, is strewn with pumpkins, a golden yellow; as if some army, inconceivably rich, had, before departing, bombarded this particular spot, leaving the ground strewn thick with great balls and shells of gold.

❁❁❁❁❁

All day the great, gaunt cactus, bristling with thorns, blazed its blood-red blossoms; all night the cereus, trailing over the rocks, orbed its pale and fragrant moons; and day and night, like lost souls, we wandered weeping among them.

On the sunset's cloudy tide
Triremes of the storm did sit,
All their hundred ports flung wide
With wild battle lanterns lit.

❋❋❋❋❋

Looking into her eyes he said: "The materials of my life, too, for the past few years would make matter for a tragedy, a soul's tragedy, unspeakably sad, sadder even than yours. For what agonizes more than the knowledge that you cannot obtain that which you would obtain? That effort avails not? That work is not rewarded with success?

"I often ask myself,

'Will fortune never come with both hands full,
But write her fair words still in foulest letters?'

"However, let me still go on dreaming; searching for the philosopher's stone of success: the powder

of projection; elixir vitæ: attempting still the transmutation of mental metals, thoughts that seemingly have no value, through spiritual alembics, cucurbites and pelicans of language and expression, like Albertus Magnus of old."

❁❁❁❁❁

The buckbush now is covered with cranberry-colored berries. The bindweed with small blue conical blossoms. From the marshes rise the seal-brown spear-heads of the cattails; and the herb-Robert tinges with bluish red the autumn hillside. Overhead the morning widens, pearly-pink, like some gigantic mussel-shell, slowly opening, showing between its luminous valves the sun like a huge red pearl.

❁❁❁❁❁

How correct is the fire of the stars; the crow of a cock; the color and the

shape of a flower. How accurate Nature is. How punctual in timing the appearance of a flower or a star. As regular as the beating of her own great heart.

❁❁❁❁❁

Poetry is the rhythmical expression of the relation of the ideal, which is the beautiful, to the actual. And here in the April woods what poetry addresses me in voices of the wind! What does it say, rushing and roaring by? tossing and tumbling, until distracted, the heads of the towering trees on the Indiana hilltops? within their fibrous hearts the responding timbre of a mighty music. Voices of jubilation, of acclaim, epic, elemental, shouting their message over the barriers of the world, bidding it prepare itself for the advent of Loveliness; to doff its ashen-colored garb of penitence and don rejoicing vestments of

azure and gold. Shawms, cymbals and sackbuts unite in the voices to produce one voice, loud, imperious, sonorous as some million-stringed instrument, to which the forests yield themselves up, rocking to and fro, like wild fanatics filled with the frenzy of some mad god whose rites they celebrate, Corybantic, the sere leaves of last year whirling and swirling around and around them like rent and riven raiment.

How much happier are the little things, the lowly things of life, how much more secure from the buffetings of fate than are the mighty, the aspiring things! This wildflower, for instance; slight, unassuming, and safe, entirely unaffected, fluttering delicately and tranquilly at the foot of this huge oak that the same wind, which merely bowed the bluet's head, a moment ago crashingly overthrew.

I heard the trees in the silence of the spring night whispering, murmuring among themselves, gossiping of the radiant garments, bud and blossom and leaf, which they were soon to don. And then I heard them quietly laughing, — as old people might, telling quaint stories of their little ones, — and speaking gently, crooningly to the tiny wildflowers nestling at their feet: flowers which the singing of the sap in their old hearts and roots had awakened, ere the rain and wind had called to them and the sunbeam had pointed them a place wherein to rise: blossoms that even now were gazing wonderingly around them, or at the stars thro' their branches, as listening children might at the eyes of their loving parents telling them legends and tales of faery.

Alas! how hearts go groping
For that which may not be!
Braving the gates where hoping,
'T is written, none shall see!
In ways of blind endeavor
And darkness of the never
The gates are closed once open;
The end is misery.

❁❁❁❁❁

Why is it thus with me as days go by?
Oh, why, oh, why?
Less frequent is the smile, more often now
the sigh.

❁❁❁❁❁

Swift as the poplar, with its lordly height,
To clothe itself in green when Springtime
calls,
When forests still are bare, is hope to come
Into our lives when love has said "pre-
pare."

❁❁❁❁❁

From the hilltop here in Kentucky, under the Aprilian blue of a perfect afternoon, a great blur of glimmering amber, gold tinged with auburn,

shows me where the budded but still blossomless black-haw stands covered with young leaves; as tenderly tinted as the festal raiment of some sylvan of the woods, or haunter of the valleys: some Dryad or Auloniad, who has come forth, slenderly and delicately, from her tree or bower to greet and meet the young-eyed Year.

Or is it the Rapunzel Spring herself, delicate and divine, odorous of fable, who has let down her tawny hair, its magnificent mane of abundant and beautiful gold, for her lover, the Wind, to clasp, to overwhelm himself with; to kiss and climb by into her enchanted tower, there to deliver himself over forever to her love?

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Wild-ginger, under these leafing wahoos, almost covers the April-wet hillside with its low, lush leaves; its belled, or chaliced blossom, huddled in the fork of its succulent stem,

divided into three pointed lobes, is the color of the nearby wake-robin, a clear, brown, port-wine red.

The silvern and golden flowers of the adder's-tongue star the brier-buried and bushy banks of the creeks. What is more beautiful than a great bed of these dog's-tooth violets with their gracefully bending and curving-petaled blossoms, pearl and topaz colored, fairly illuminating, as with fairy lamps, the sodden and turfless soil of the creek-rivage! These are gems indeed that any one can have for the stooping and gathering. And their spiritual value, if not their material, is, at least to me, even greater than that of real pearls and topazes.

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Apple blossoms and bees; pelting petals; honeyed hummings. What glory! what memorable music! what beauty redolent of immortal memories! A mountain of blooms, large

and white, delicately tinged with pink, with occasional clusters of rosy, puckered buds, waving in and perfuming the balmy wind of April. How this old tree, with its million blossoms and its murmuring bees, brings back vividly the memory of my boyhood passed among the Indiana hills! Every falling petal, every bee murmur is fraught with the fragrance of remembered happiness. And now, drowned in its deeps of blossoming and exultant snow, a catbird goes mad with music. — Or is it the voice of my lost dreams singing to me in words that only my soul can understand? And there where, — whispers of pearl, little silvery sighs of happiness breathed by the pure lips of Spring, — the dog's-tooth violets blur gray the creek banks, I seem to see a presence passing, dimly, a bright shadow with windflowers in its hair. The materialized memory of a spring

long gone; a spring of my earliest youth; with cheeks and mouth a brier-rose red, her eyes a pansy-violet azure, singing a song of home.

Or there, asway on a carpet of celandine gold and bluebell blue, now with a "wick, wick, wick," of a flicker fiddle; now with a "cheer, cheer, cheer," of a redbird reed, I seem to see and hear her, that long-lost Spring, playing an air to which the chipmunks dance — the little ground-squirrels their blood a-beat with the intoxication of springtime.

She is the same as she was when, with whippoorwill words, she lured and led my boyhood into her twilight woods at dewy dusk; her forests filled with faery fancies; to a sequestered and vine-embowered spot, where the first Mayapples unfolded their miniature moons under the young May moon; and amid whose parasols and blossoms she seated me

in the whippoorwill-haunted hush, and, to the music of the cricket, told me wonder stories, elfin tales, my heart shall never forget.

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On a low fern-based rock, — mossy shrine of the wood-god who has this particular forest under his protection, — before which, like a candelabrum before an altar, burning with many silken flames of greenish gold, a young hickory lifted up its hundred pointed leaf-sheaths, and a paw-paw shook its sacramental bells of bronze, — I laid an offering of wild flowers this last day of April: — Mayapples, with their milky moons; trilliums, stainless of star and whiter than alabaster; the belled ivory of the bellwort; the lavender and lilac bonnets of the iris; the hooded green and mulberry-purple of the Indian-turnip; the disced amber and gold of the crowfoot and the hawkweed; the

hollow sapphire of the polemonium or Jacob's-ladder; the bugled crimson of the columbine; the crystal and azure of the wild dwarf larkspur; and the constellated loveliness of a myriad bluets, starflowers, and bird's-foot violets.

Let us follow this path, that leads us past wild crabapple trees,— huge bouquets of shell-pink blooms,— through wild strawberries starring their blossoms under budded blackberry briers, to a heron-haunted creek, a ribbon of silver winding around a woodland where the cuckoo, the chat, and the thrush keep up a continual calling; and at whose entrance the haw-tree and dogwood, in full flower, stand like white-stoled worshippers before the entrance to a great green temple, — a temple whose floor is marbled with green and mosaiced with pearl and gold and azure;

oxalis, ranunculus, and houstonia; and lamped with the veined feldspar of the wild geranium and the silken sapphire of the spiderwort.

While lone I stood
Within the wood
I heard the feet of Silence edge
And stumble on a rocky ledge —
A sound of waters foaming down
Between mossed banks of green and brown:
And through the trees, that leaned to listen,
I caught a momentary glisten
Of her white limbs all interwound
With white confusion of her gown,
That made a dim and glimmering sound.

What a queer bird is the whippoorwill! that has, or seems to have, no sense of concealment, so far as its nest is concerned. Perhaps this is because it usually selects the most unfrequented parts of the forest to

brood in. To-day I startled one from its hover. Soundlessly it flew before me, clothed like the night in russet and sable, a drowsy flutter of wings, trying to lure me away from the two cream-white eggs, — the customary number,—brown-and-blue-spotted, lying where I could not help but see them, without the sign of a nest, on the dead oak leaves right before me, partly protected by the dead branch of a tree.

A little farther on, in a different part of the forest, at the foot of a huge beech, sat a great, dark brown owl, a hawk-like owl; round-headed and round-eyed; a day owl. Almost as silently as the whippoorwill it arose at my approach, disappearing, downy of flight, dark and swift, into the green and gray of the deep beeches, like some impish evil.

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WHERE the spring is sunken in the damp gray rock, mossy with moisture, the wild larkspur, petunia, morning-glory and wild potato bloom. And there, at the end of the path, like a terra-cotta-colored torch, the pleurisy-root flames; the snake-root, with its evil-smelling flowers, like long white candles, seems to wish to light me further on; on to where the butternut and water-beech embrace one another above the stream, like lovers parted by some petty spite, locking arms above its gossip, in the foliage sanctity of their hearts nesting a cooing dove.

The small gray-blue heron, the fly-up-the-creek, frightened from its

fishing, rises gracefully from its pool, winging and fading, shadow-like, a soft and silent flight, far down the creek.

In a swirl of butterflies, mottled maroon, pied yellow and gray, and velvety gold and seal, I pass along the creek, where, startled by my footsteps, the water-snake slides soundless, like a crooked root, from the shore; and the silvery minnows, as with one impulse, twinkle instantly and swiftly out of sight.

The tufted titmouse fusses in the buckeye tree near by; and the shadows of the slender willow leaves appear, imaged in the shallow pool, to be the silverless phantoms of a minnow-school. Here the blossoming horsemint and teasel blur with pink the weedy hillside. Along the creek banks and amid the pebbles and rocks of its dry watercourse the blackberry-lilies mass themselves, a mot-

tled ruddy red, reflected here and there in the lazy-running water; lazier than the small white summer clouds that float above, or the brilliant dragon-flies that haunt its banks.

A vagabond foot and a vagabond road,
And the love in our hearts our only load.

An easy foot in an easy shoe,
And who is it cares where the road leads to?

'An old plank gate at a lane's green end,
And who is it cares where the lane may wend?

A bowl of milk and a bit of bread,
Who richer fares or is better fed?

A crust, a spring and a blackberry,
And who is it sups as well as we?

A hut by the road and a girl to kiss,
What man hath greater joy than this?

The night, the stars, and a pillow of hay,
Whose bed is sweeter than this, I say?

Whose dreams are deeper? whose sleep as pure? —
The heart that 's heavy finds here its cure.

FINLEY WOODS, JULY 15th.

The cawing of crows reminds me of the carping of critics; whether their voices be raised in praise or blame it is all the same — a lot of noise that leads to nothing. The world jogs along just as usual in spite of what they consider their own importance, and in a little while all their fussing is forgotten; the world, like the woods around, has heard but has it heeded? It will judge for itself later on when their cawings have ceased.

Art is a virgin whose children are all immaculately conceived and born.

Along the St. John's River soft maples, ruddily tufted, made bright the sombre banks, showing only occasionally a pine or palmetto amid the wilderness of cypress trees trailing with moss. Cherokee roses too rarely ran a rambling riot of great white blossoms around the bole of some live-oak. The water, of a sullen blackness, had no more current than a pond or lagoon. The furrow of our little steamer fell away from the stern in a sort of yeasty, smoky-topaz foam. Water-lilies laid long banks of blossoms along either shore. An alligator, a squamous and sluggish bulk, slowly crossed a lily-paven inlet.

Lilies; more lilies; interminatingly at times they seemed to spread over the entire river a cloth of gold. Hemlocks, cypresses, and black-gums seemed to welcome us with the waving of funereal banners, long streamers of Spanish moss, as we

entered the Ocklawaha, passing a leaky-looking rowboat with an old negro in it, picturesque among the yellow lilies of a lagoon. Lilies; lilies, holding up everywhere innumerable fists tight full of gold. The dogwood and jessamine, in full bloom, diversified with white and gold the seemingly impenetrable woods. Here and there on the high-lifted, desolate branches of twisted trees, looking like the huge nests of unknown birds of prey, great clumps and masses of mistletoe were seen. The Everglades could hardly look more forbidding than the forested swamp that stretched out on either side of our boat.

One would imagine that the Ocklawaha was entirely destitute of current, until, gazing downward, deep into the clear but dark-brown depths, one beheld, at intervals, the long water-grasses, growing on its bottom,

streaming green, — streaks of copperas inclosed in crystal. In its placid, mirror-like depths the skies and woods are so exactly reproduced that you are often deceived as to which is the real and which is the reflection. Bittern and heron and egret haunt here; often winging slowly over the ivied and creepered solitudes. And startled by our approach crane and kingfisher swing along its surface, beneath which swim their images amid the green streaks of grass, that reminds one of the streaming hair of kelpies. Hell-divers or didappers rise, flash away, and the teal, with their instant wings, skip the water into ripples. At twilight the limpkins begin their wild wailing, plaintive as that of a lost child; and like a vulture, silent and solitary, on the dead limb of a tree the water-turkey sits, sombre above the uncurling, ghostly spider-lilies,

hanging, long strips of white, among the cypress-knees.

In the darkness, before the coming of the moon, we seemed passing between immaterial walls of phantom forest, clothed in the fluttering cerements of the dead, the dark wild-trailing moss — or was it the waving of spectral arms, ghostly strouds and mantles of dead Seminoles? Enormous hands, taloned and crooked of finger, seemed clutching up at us out of the unseen waters, or impended, threateningly, above, eager and waiting an opportunity to snatch us away into the phantom forest; nearly always they resolved themselves into the gaunt and twisted limbs of leaning trees.

The moon is up. A flare of pine-knots is blazing in a huge iron sconce at the top of the pilot-house. The deck-hands are gathered together at the bow of the Okeehumkee with

banjo and guitar. The forest echoes awaken to the strains of negro melodies: "In de mornin' by de bright light"; "Did not old Pharaoh git lost in dat Red Sea"; "Way up de Ocklawaha"; "Carve dat possum," etc., etc., etc.

From an almost sleepless night in my narrow cabin, having been kept awake by the clattering and crashing of branches that raked every now and then the sides of the Okeehumkee in its passage up the stream, I arose to find the morning massed and streaming with mist; the forests seemingly more spectral-looking through the banks and flying shreds of vapor than they were last night. Suddenly the sun rose scattering with level crimson lances, wildly glorious, the routed and ribboned fog. We had left the Ocklawaha and were steaming up Silver Spring Run. Drenched with the mist and dew the moss hung

motionless from the trees, smoky-brown and dripping. The butterflies that had taken shelter upon our decks during the night were too weighed down with the wet to lift their wings.

The water of Silver Spring Run is perfectly pellucid; to the depth of some forty odd feet everything is plainly visible. Garfish, bream, black-bass, pickerel, and turtle are discernible swimming slowly or swiftly away from our advancing keel. At Silver Spring itself we gaze down, as we pass over it, upon a mighty ledge of rock, magnified by the refraction of the water probably, forty-eight feet from the surface; it seems to be, with its great rift, the entrance to some vast cavern that disgorges an underground river which furnishes the water of this great spring. At the depth of eighty-four feet the bottom is perfectly visible and the ripples of a rowboat, oaring and

breaking the surface, are magnified a hundredfold on the rocks below, irisated into wonderful colors: emerald green and ultramarine blue, blurring and streaking the bottom; the effect being the same as that of some glimmering submarine scene presented in pantomime on the stage.

The clear, round lake, hemmed in as far as the eye can see with forests of cypress, black-gum, live-oak, pine and palmetto, solemn-hung with their gray moss, is a weird setting for its mysterious crystal. Here and there the cypresses and black-gums, swollen by the water, bulge out abruptly, the tree-trunk seemingly supported on a black pedestal. The cypress-knees, extinguisher-shaped (like so many giant clubs thrust knot downward into the water), bristled along the shore; and the forest towering above them, silent and sad, was like some strange woodland turned to stone.

Amid it all, as I sat dreaming alone by the shore, and the sunset built up vast teocallis and temples of copper-colored cloud in the west, I felt as one might feel who, beyond the condor-haunted Cordilleras, comes suddenly upon some ancient and dead city of Yucatan, Honduras, or Mexico: Mitla, Uxmal, Palenque, or Copan, lost in stupendous and impenetrable forests of the ceïba, mimosa, and yucca, trailing enormous creepers and huge cacti, and wild and wonderful lianas, cataracts of gorgeous crimson flowers.

THE OCKLAWAHA AND SILVER SPRING, FLA., FEB., 1893.

I have talked of the curculio, the codling-moth, the rust of the oats and the smut of the corn with the farmers until the better part of the morning is past. At last I am by myself again, on the hilltop among

the creepered trees and rocks. The sunlight strikes athwart the dew and every cedar glitters as if clothed in silver-linked mail. The bob-white calls to his mate through the freshness and the dew of the deep August morning; and where the mist trails its fleecy folds from hilltop to hilltop, the wild hawk, soaring, screams and screams. The birds are outdoing each other in vocal gymnastics; and now the sound of the wind in the leagues of trees is like the breaking of far waters on a shelly shore.

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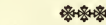
The tops of the oaks nod, ruddy in the sun, like Celtic kings giving audience to wild tribes, — the winds, — their gold-red beards and hair quivering with wrath. The tree-toad's guttural fluting is like the blowing of bubbles of cloudy crystal through hollow silver; the lonely sound seems

more suitable to the melancholy of the evening than to the mirth of the morning. The day, in spite of its clouds, promises to be fair.

As, all distraught, with dark, neglected hair
She lifted up her face to mine I saw
The moon-white glory of her soul, and love
Smiled sadly at me from her shadowy eyes.



Now is the sunset's presence fragrant and beautiful as the presence of some young Greek: his feet anointed with Megallian oils, his bosom and arms odorous of the essence of thyme; his eyebrows and hair sweet with marjoram; his knees and neck with oil of wild ivy: robed in a robe of murex-dye, smelling sweeter than the costly ointment of Peron, he walks the twilight world,

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supple and gleaming of limb, sowing the earth with immaterial blossoms, ground-thyme, crocus, hyacinth, helichryse and amaracus.

In the "Deipnosophists" Athenæus speaks thus: "Formerly, to be popular with the vulgar was reckoned a certain sign of a want of *real skill:* on which account Asopodorus, the Phliasian, when some flute-player was being much applauded, while he himself was remaining in the hyposcenium (a certain part of the theatre), said, 'What is all this? the man has evidently committed some great blunder.'"

How true is this of a great many of our suddenly successful writers, whose works meet with such overwhelming applause from the public, which is the vulgar, and reach such phenomenal sales. I never hear of

a new book that everybody praises and recommends but that I am straightway suspicious of its literary merit and avoid reading it, feeling sure that the author has probably "committed some great blunder."

I have read somewhere of the helichryse, which some one, is it Athenæus? says is a flower like the lotus. Also of the amaracus, a purple lily, which is called by some people the sampsychus: I have never seen the helichryse nor the amaracus, but neither, I will venture to say, could compare in splendid beauty with this trumpet-flower, glowing scarlet, and this Turk's-cap lily, streaked with crimson, growing here in our unclassic fields.

The Greeks claimed that the most fragrant roses grew in Cyrene; on which account the perfumes said to

have been made there surpassed all others in sweetness; this was said to be true also of the perfumes made from violets and other flowers grown there which were most pure and heavenly; and, above all, the fragrance of the crocus which was said to be indescribably sweet. Now I will venture again to say that no Cyrenian rose could smell sweeter than the brier-rose I have found blooming on our own hills and in our own valleys, by the streamside and the roadside, in May and June. And no violet and no crocus of Greece ever attained to such elusive and subtle sublimity of scent as does our wild crabapple blossom.

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Is not the poet's inspiration like that fabulous Fountain of Elusides, spoken of in old chronicles, whose miraculous waters, it is said, rose to

the sound of music, and, the music ceasing, sank again?

The milkweeds nod their Rip-Van-Winkle heads
When Autumn blows; and in the snoring flue
The chill wind sleeps. All night it seems to me
A goblin gnome, a Lob Lie-by-the-Fire,
Sits humped upon the hob whining of cold,
Or whistling to the flame to keep him warm.

These misty forests of white and black and red and chestnut oak that drop their acorns around me as I go, and fill the air with sad fragrance premonitory of their decay, bring to my mind, I know not why, the Assyrian dwarf-oak that is said to secrete manna, from whose branches it is gathered in quantities. During foggy weather the manna is distilled

on the rocks and even on the sand, as here the acorns, agate-brown and black, are showered over the ways — mast that is manna to many things, birds and beasts and, perhaps, men.

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The sunrise this morning was yellow as Median marble, the marble of Tabriz which is so transparent, it is said, that it may be cut thin and used instead of window glass. Gradually the heaven above grew blue, blue as Phœnician lapis lazuli, while below it the horizon deepened into red, crimson as Choaspian agate, fading upwards into amethystine purple and smaragdine green, lordly colors through which the sun advanced like a mighty monarch, resplendent in burning mail of gold, pacing the glittering lines and barbaric splendors of his court.

In the Garden of Skulls and Serpents,
By a tower of gold,
Stood a woman, fair as fire,
Wonderful to behold.

Webs of starry flame she wove there,
Webs of moony fire,
Snares to seize the souls of mortals,
Slay them with desire.

The pure precision of a star, a flower,
The punctuality of their return
And order of their coming fill my soul
With the astonishment which mortals feel
For Bible beauties that no man explains.

I have listened long unto the promises,
The confidences of the trees; and now,
Continuous with the trees, a stream expands,
Expounding all the woods' dim mysteries
In ripple rhymes sung softly to itself.

I saw the Spring go by, her mouth a thread
Of wild-rose red,
Blowing a golden oat;
And now, a crown of barley on her head,
The Summer comes, a poppy at her throat.

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As Laïs obtained ascendency over the cynical spirit of Diogenes, so does the moonlight, brightly beautiful, overcome the retired and moody darkness of this glade. And, like Phryne, — whose charms exposed before the judges saved her from sentence of death, and whose beauty inspired the sculptor Praxiteles when he modelled the Venus of Knidos, also Apelles when he painted Venus rising from the sea, — so does the naked moon fill with wondering awe the bosoms of the hills and streams, mastering and compelling them with her beauty.

An Eldorado of vales and peaks,
That the cloudy ore of the sunset streaks,
Is the Eldorado my fancy seeks:
Where the gold lies thick that they feign
to find, —
That never in earthly mine was mined, —
In the airy caves of the dæmonkind.

A rune of glimmer and a scrawl of light,
Printing with gold the black-bound page
of night,
The glow-worm is, making its blackness
bright.

The deep blue spike of the great lobelia
glows
Beside the cardinal-flower along the ways
Where Summer goes stripping the way-
side rose
Of all its blooms, and plumping red its
hips;
Her grasshopper gown of rustling golds
and grays
Bristling with burrs caught from the tre-
foil's sprays,
And from the thorny marigold's tick-like
tips.

Now do the katydids, leaf-crickets and weed-insects of the dusk, that stridulate the long night through, celebrate their Erotidia, or festivals of love. Or are they elves disguised, insect-like, in long close coats of green and gray, that, by the light of the harvest-moon, hold wild revelry? chanting, as at their banquets the Greeks, a cricket-scholium — a song which went the rounds; sung to the lyre by the guests, one after the other, each guest holding a myrtle branch which he passed on to any one he chose.

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No lovelier, no wittier women lived than the courtesans of Greece: witness Neæra, Cottina, the celebrated Lacodæmonian courtesan, and the Athenian courtesan by name Mania, whose beauty was as great as that of Phryne and whose wit and repartee equalled that of Aspasia. They were

women appreciative of the best in art and literature. Therefore it is no wonder that they were sought out by, and became the powerful mistresses of, the greatest philosophers, poets, and statesmen of Greece.

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Watching the fireflies to-night, flashing hither and thither, up and down the darkness, reminds me of some elfin dance with torches: some Bacchic or Pyrrhic dance of the fairies: a dance like that danced by the worshippers of Bacchus in ancient Greece, wherein the dancers carried thyrsi and torches, and moved to the most beautiful airs. Perhaps it is really and truly the Pyrrhic dance of Elfland at which I am looking. This, however, is a respectable, not an indecorous dance — who could conceive the fairies engaging in any but a respectable dance? No; such

indecent dances as the Pyrrhic or Codax dances are not for them; this dance is like that, wild and yet restrained, which the Greeks called the Emmelia.

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I wonder if the summer insects, such as the leaf-cricket and the green grig and grasshopper, with their stinging music, did not first suggest to some one the thought of inventing a stringed instrument; we are all acquainted with the myth of how the lyre came to be fashioned by Mercury out of the shell of a tortoise, but no one, so far as I am aware, has told us how the other stringed instruments used by the ancients came to be invented. Perhaps it was a grasshopper that suggested to the Parthians the making of the sambuca, a musical instrument of four strings; and the cricket that suggested the magadis and pectis, both

played without a plectrum. Terpander, although they say he invented the barbitos to correspond to, and answer the pectis in use among the Lydians, may have got his idea from a long-legged grig or leaf-cricket singing merrily in the summer grass by some Arcadian stream.

This is the month when the wild-sage silvers green in the shade of elder-brake and trumpet-vine; the wild-parsnip goldens its flowering ulms; and the moth-mullein discs its pedicels with blossoming yellow or white, tinged delicately with purple or crimson.

The aster does not always postpone until late summer or early fall its time of flowering, for weaving its intricate lacework of blossoming stars: I have found both the pink and

white aster blooming in the middle of June in retired and moist places of brushy underwoods and hollows, lost in a riot of weedy vervain, overwhelming everything with their numberless blue and white terminal tongues of blossoms.

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Aug. 4, 1894, 7.15 P. M.; twilight. — The west is a deep orange red above which and within which silvers the crescent moon; against the sky's gamboge the trees are outlined greenish black; the wooded valleys, of a dusky damson purple, look hazy through a thin veil of blue wood-smoke of burning brush. A bob-white whistles and a vesper-sparrow, plaintively, pensively, warbles a moment in a heavily foliaged locust tree; its mate replies in a tree near by; and in the orchard another takes up the song and passes it on to one who responds in the

vineyard; the dusk seems holier for their singing.

The green leaf-cricket, the climbing-cricket, moves its fragile wings of transparent shell, making a delicate tremolo sound, soothing and dreamily melancholy, like a dim reed, ghostly and golden, blown by a weed-hidden fairy. The west fades into ashen and rose and night comes starry and cool and calm.

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I gazed upon the wasted lips of Want
Within a city haunt
Of vice and sin,
And thought of the green, the abundant fields beyond
The sordid streets, whither Want could not win,
The sick and fond;
And, where the white-top like dim streaks of steam
Wavers its whiteness, lay him down and dream,
Lapped in the murmur of a meadowed stream.

As a dead leaf is lifted by no discernible wind, but seemingly by its own volition, in the forests of spring, stayed and swayed and suspended for a moment over its silent and withered companions, and then dropped suddenly, instantly, precipitately upon them and mingled indistinguishably with them: so is the fancy, that yesterday was alive and green and fair, taken up subconsciously, by no perceptible wind of thought, and poised and considered for a moment and then dropped silently among the dead fancies of many dead days of dreaming.

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Clouds suddenly obscured the sky, spreading smoke-like through the calm of heaven as black soil, loose and loamy, dropped from a precipitate hand, discolors, extending outward from the central disturbance,

a pool of perfectly clear water, clouding it circularly.

April is here, smelling spicily as does the young gold green of the gummy velvet sheaths that hold the leaves of the hickory trees; her hair gay with apple blossoms, odorous of rain, she comes, a sunny and showery presence, down the orchard ways. Here she walks under the shadowy cedars, pressing with warm fingers the distending and opening cones, distinctly heard, snap on snap, like the clapping of the great beak of some unknown and invisible bird. I notice that this year (April, 1898) the bumble-bees are more numerous among the apple blossoms than are the honey-bees. Query: Do the bumble-bees appear earlier than the honey-bees?

The bumble-bee is no respecter of

the virgin bud of the apple tree: forcibly he takes possession of her; pushing the tender petals violently aside with his fore feet he rudely thrusts his head into the very heart of the nectary, sucking up its inmost sweet. A ravisher of beauty and of innocence, he commits many rapes, thousands of them, daily.

You can smell the wild rose in the leaf even before the bush is budded: it is a racy, juice-suggestive smell like that of a ripe June-apple.

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May 6th, 1898. Snowing hard; the worst snow storm we have had this year. I cannot help thinking how bland the wind blew — was it only yesterday? — and how like a fickle woman the month has already proven herself: now warm, now cold; now inviting, now repelling, but al-

ways sweet of voice even when coldest.

"The devil hath not in all his quiver's choice
An arrow for the heart like a sweet voice."

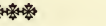
❁❁❁❁❁

Green in the circle of contingent trees
The water lies wherein the new leaf sees
Its twinkling shadow. Through the boscage leers
The beast-like visage with the satyr smile
Of what has followed me this many a mile,
Earth's lust, hot-eyed, with horrible mouth and ears.

❁❁❁❁❁

I imagine the Bible of the Fairies to be a book whose pages are the gossamer wings, pale, delicate, transparent green, of the climbing leaf-cricket; its binding, of moth wings elaborately tooled and mottled with azure and gray and gold edged with seal-brown or ruby; the letters of its text minute as the tracks of ants.

High up, in inaccessible reaches of violet and rose, the morning's reverberated fires dazzle the eyes like the burning points of a myriad sylphide spears.



On every side the roses rise
In crimson insolence and pride;
And near them, steeped in lordly dyes,
That to the roses' are allied,
Of transitory purple and pearl,
The poppies' delicate flowers uncurl.

The shadows where no light looked through,
Ephemeral sapphire, lay in pools of blue;
And there the spendthrift flowers flung
Their petaled gold; and many a tongue
Of many a wild bird of their beauty sung.

With all my heart I deem it no great folly
To be in love with gentle Melancholy;

with her, who, to my thinking, expresses all that is most sad, and

therefore most pensively beautiful, in Nature. The winds and the waters and the leaves, the moon and the stars and the flowers are eloquent of her. Her sad loveliness addresses us in the dewy voice of the hyla, and the crepuscular, the tenebrious tones of the leaf-cricket: like Wordsworth's poet,

> "She is retired as noontide dew
> Or fountain in a noonday grove,
> And you must love her ere to you
> She will seem worthy of your love."

❁❁❁❁❁

The inviolable and unapproachable presence of a spirit seems regarding me from the sunset; clothed in stupendous colors it towers, addressing in words of violet and rose the earth and the heavens, inaudible harmonies of fire, hushing the universe to sleep.

❁❁❁❁❁

Wordsworth never beheld our little bluet, the *houstonia cærulea.* I never

see it, among the earliest of our spring wildflowers, with its starry eyes of watchet-blue looking up at me from the forest floor, shyly as if afraid of its own loveliness, that I do not think of those beautiful lines of his: —

" So fair, so sweet, withal so sensitive: —
Would that the little flowers were born
to live
Conscious of half the pleasure that they
give.
That to this mountain daisy's self were
known
The beauty of its star-shaped shadow
thrown
On the smooth surface of this naked
stone."

What bird is that that sings so long?
To hear whose song
Each bashful bud opens its rosy ear,
Leaning it near.
While here,

Under the blossoming button-tree,
I seem to see
A shape, a presence look out at me;
And, clothed in raiment of white and gray,
Pass on like the Spirit of Easter Day.

Not for things which we know, but for things which we feel should we value life most.

The sunset lets its heavy curtains down
Of thunder-purple orphreyed deep with gold
Around the cloudy-builded couch of Day,
Canopied with the star-wrought blue of heaven.

These are the cups of Comus,
These tulips pranked with flame,
The tulip-burning twilight fills
With wine of wondrous name.

Yea; death behind her, gazing through her hair;
Death in her lips and in her body fair;

Ten hundred deaths to him whose heart
is hers,
Who kisses her — death, darkness, and
despair.

❀❀❀❀❀

Dr. Johnson says: — "Women have a perpetual envy of our vices; they are less vicious than we, not from choice, but because we restrict them; they are the slaves of order and fashion; their virtue is of more consequence to us than our own, so far as concerns this world."

This lumbering cloud, lazily drifting through the literary firmament of the eighteenth century, occasionally shed great truths from its bounteous bulk, rain-like, on the surrounding land, giving new life to its parsimonious and ungrateful growths, swelling every little river that it touched upon, — such as Boswell, — with a portion of its own importance.

The blue wild hyssop, with its dewy
mouth, —
Cool, moist, and heavenly 'mid the pink-
bloomed mint
Along the shallow creek, shrunk with the
drouth, —
Seen suddenly thus, seems, swift, an in-
stant's hint
Of some dim being — one, whom, still in
vain,
I follow where their many delicate ears
The purple beard's-tongue and lobelia lean
Sidewise to silence, listening for the rain
Tiptoeing the trees through which she
flees again —
The presence that my soul adores yet fears,
The Loveliness my eyes have never seen.

❁❁❁❁❁

Here bloomed the black-eyed Susan and the white wild carrot, with its resinous odor, beneath the Chickasaw plum tree whose crimson fruit strewed, like blood-red agates, scattered by the hand of August, the dry bed of the creek, or glimpsed, like a dryad's lips, a luscious red, through

the intricate green of the boughs above. There the vervain with its ragged witch-wisps of weedy blossoms nodded at me from the dusty roadside together with the hot yellow eyes of the wild sunflowers and daisies. Seated upon a stone I said to myself, — "Love is the wizard's circle which circumscribes life; inside it, all the joys of Earth and Paradise: outside it, and beyond it, death and darkness and hell."

❁❁❁❁❁

Drab-colored seed pods of the autumn hung,
Like beggar's tatters, on the red-bud boughs:
Around the old, old house there was no sound,
No song or sound, save on the rotting shed,
The dim old shed, a dove made plaintive moan.
In rapt clairvoyance gray the shadows lay

Around it seeing many things unseen
Of mortal eyes, strange things now dead and gone,
Ghosts of the sometime gladness dwelling there,
Spectres of age and youth, and sorrows old,
Older than all the oldness sleeping there
'Mid clemencies of days forever gone.

A poet's soul 's unconscious of its dreams
As is the night unconscious of its stars,
As is the heaven of all its clouds and winds,
And Earth, retentive Earth, of all its flowers.

The bright half moon, a boat pearl-white,
Floats down the cloud-canals of night.

The ghostly blue of the night sky seen through the white wrack-remnants of the storm is the blue of bluet blossoms showing their dim patches and streaks through the white petals dropped by the blossoming dogwoods.

How wonderfully bright the stars are after storm! it is with them too as it is with the flowers, as if they had been washed clean. And, like the flowers, the reserved wildflowers, they seem pregnant with some message, some secret which they are yearning to impart, that they would divulge but dare not.

When earth forgets one flower that comes
with spring,
And heaven one star that beautifies the
night,
Shall I forget that song I heard her sing.

❁❁❁❁❁

An old Spanish saying is that "a kiss without a moustache is like an egg without salt."

And what says Boccaccio? —

"Lips for kissing forfeit no favor;
Nay, they renew as the moon doth ever."

So must the bees and the butterflies think who are never weary of

saluting the flowers; and love particularly to kiss, if I am not mistaken, those that are bearded of lip, such as the larkspur, the snapdragon, the hairy beard's-tongue, toad-flax, and hyssop, iris, foxglove and catkin, whose mouths are elfin horns of honey, or vats of fairy wine.

❁❁❁❁❁

What pictures on wood, painted by Tuscan artists, taken from the shrines and altars of old churches, predellas and triptychs, or three-folding tablets, shaped quaintly in Gothic peaks, gleaming with backgrounds of antique gold, could compare in coloring with the illuminated painting of a butterfly's wings? such a butterfly as I beheld to-day — cobalt and crimson and gold, bronze and purple and black, wing-wide on a corymb of blossoming weed.

All night it rained. Now in the dawn
The purple-berried cedars stand
Weighed down with wet the sun strikes
through.

Last night, July the 13th, 1897, at 8:30 o'clock, a phenomenon was presented to my gaze such as it was never my fortune to see before and, I suppose, will never be my fortune to see again. A moon-bow, a lunar rainbow, of gigantic proportions, arched its phantom reflection over the not distant wood, stretching dimly away to the north and south, outlining its spectral colors against the showering clouds of the west as the moon, broad and bright and full, rose in the unclouded east.

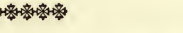
This morning I find the forest dotted with bulbous and spongy fungi; strange things, fluted and lobed, ooze from decaying trunks of trees or from old stumps and logs, rusted and rotted red; yellow and

buttery-looking things on which the slug and snail feed. And everywhere, everywhere the dotting domes and parasols and cushions of the toadstools, pink-ribbed or white, on thin or squat stems, make bright spots of color — crimson, green, gray, fawn, white, and salmon. To-night perhaps, if I watch and am favored as is the slug that slimes the cobweb stretched across the hollow stump, or the firefly, that flits its lamp searchingly hither and thither, I, too, may see them heave their white roofs through the ferns like goblin huts, an elfin city.

❁❁❁❁❁

I love to linger o'er the roseless rose
When hips are ripe and candle-flames they seem,
Orange and red, lit in the Autumn's honor,
Who softly goes,
Her ruby crown upon her,
Adown the ways where vines like banners stream.

The auroral scent of morning lilies blows
Mixed with nocturnal perfumes of the rose
Around the Dawn whose state invades the
sky
Trailing wild raiment of sidereal dye,
Holding her torch of spheric fire high.



Its banks clumped with the hot bronze and yellow of the black-eyed Susans and the rocket-like stars of the towering elecampane, not far from where I am sitting, beneath a bower, as it were, of berry-clustered bittersweet, already turning orange, and huge, yellow-white blossom-plumes of the Hercules-club, is a lily-leafed pond, the quivering crystal of which is wrinkled and circled into frantic lines by the swift, mad movements of a swarm of gunmetal-colored waterbugs, whose dull-shining backs are boat-shaped. Watching them, curious to learn the reason for their Corybantic antics, I hear the

sudden cat-like squeak of a young frog that has just taken leave of its tadpole part and plunged into the water to rejoice with its fellows, or brag to the great frog, with the big, bass voice, like the twang of a bow-string, of how very soon he will out-sing him by the light of the August moon. This, probably, it was that drove the waterbugs into such demonstrations of delight: — or was it the flashing by of that living shuttle of checkered white and black, that aerial weaver of weird dances, the dragon-fly, whose erratic revolutions inspired them with a reciprocal desire to imitate on the water the lines and curves it wove overhead?

August 1st. Heavy, heaven-purple plumes of the hyssop azure the shadowy tangles of the briered, sumached and sassafrassed fallows; and where

the sunlight dusts down glimmering gold, mottling the cool gloom of the woods, their massed blossoms seem imprisoned patches of sky, vaguely violet, bringing the heart into the mouth with the suddenness of their beauty, and, — as the spot of daylight at the far end of a cavern, after hours of darkness, — holding the eye and lifting the soul with hope.

The last of the ox-eyed daisies are now blooming, — as clean and white looking as their sisters were that hailed the advent of June, — scattered among the black-eyed Susans and the wild coreopsis that spread a cloth of gold for the feet of August, who comes clad in the royal purple of the iron-weed, a starry crown of the rudbeckia, — an Ariadne coronal, — upon her auburn hair; within whose front the rubied aigret of a cardinal-flower flames; in her hand a great plume of goldenrod, a torch

lighting her way; her gown, embroidered with the rosy moons of the marsh-mallow, rustling locust-loud, or rasping grasshopper-like as she goes, an elecampane blossom glowing at her throat.

From the inexhaustible fountains of the stars, ancient, unalterable, the night pours out her radiance as of old; and in their light I go the old trodden way of trees as oft I went when, in my boyhood's days, I walked with song and story.

The salmon-colored broomsedge seems sunset fire fallen on the autumn fields. The puddles left of last night's rain gleam like mirrors of polished steel. Among the awns and beards of the bristling gray grasses the wind hisses angrily, and a solitary climbing cricket mournfully moves its wings, making a quavering

and reedy music. The sun slopes slowly towards his setting, and there, in a black cloud, suddenly an eye seems to shape itself, oblong, sinister, narrowed to a line of flame, glaring as a fiend might from behind dark folds of haunted arras.

As I went riding toward the sea,
By field and hill and flower and tree,
The thickets parted and suddenly
A satyr's face laughed out at me.

Now is the ageratum, or mist-flower, seen blooming, blue as the late September heavens, everywhere, by the wayside, in the woods, and along the banks of autumn waters. It is as if one were walking amid fallen and scattered strips and streaks and patches of azure heaven. Their blossoms populate with blue, rank on rank, especially the banks of the

slowly-sliding streams; crowding each other into the water in order to gaze upon their own reflected loveliness, leaning far over, careless of drowning, only to get a glimpse of themselves. Here and there, scattered among them, glow the sturdy stalks of the great lobelia, torches of feldspar fire.

❁❁❁❁❁

I walked by the golden-tessellated streams of fall; waters, scattered with the slender leaves of the willow, whose currents slowly carry down to stirless pools patens of gold and bronze, arranging them in wonderful mosaics. Here and there along their banks, from a wilderness of blossoming goldenrod, the reddening sumachs thrust up heavy, brick-red plumes of seeds, frosted and glistening with oil; a gipsy carmine, that Autumn employs to stain her cheeks with, here where in the hazy woods

she stands leaning upon a stump whose lower part is ruffed round, like a brown and wrinkled throat, with cream-white fungus. Whereso-ever she steps mushrooms and toad-stools spring up, and the rotting and sodden roots of decaying trees don fantastic frills, green and gray and orange colored, and the air is filled with the agaric odor of dampness and decay.

❁❁❁❁❁

Who is it that can define poetry, the indefinable? I have tried again and again to define it, but all my definitions have proven unsatisfactory to me; one definition I remember, that seemed to arrive nearer to it than all the others, is that poetry is the metrical or rhythmical expression of the emotions occasioned by the sight or the knowledge of the beautiful, the melancholy, and the noble in nature and in man.

The polished berries, oval crimson, of the spicewood bush brighten through the dark green leaves, — like the wreath that crowns a dryad's hair, — in the woodlands of September that lean, in quiet contemplation of themselves, over the sluggish waters of a creek. The furtive crawfish darts sidewise-backward, swiftly, claws advanced, over the brown bottom of the creek-bed, taking refuge from my outreached hand under the oozy edge of a rock, on which lies the singularly globed and angled shadow, bubble-like, of the water-strider. The great lobelia's purple and the blue of the mist-flower together with the cardinal-flower's scarlet lend splendid tone to the banks of the running streams or weedy and waterless ditches of the wayside.

Her hair wreathed round with the wild oats' bristling awns September went; and now October follows her, crowned with the black-gum's crimson leaves pointed here and there with the purple-black of its berries. Among the brush by the roadside the hazels show their long, grayish white buds; and on leafless branches the ripened nuts gloom in brown clusters and gold, reminding one of elfin heads peeping out of scolloped ruffs.

❁❁❁❁❁

Early in October I found the Hercules-club towering by the dusty way or hanging its heavy head of elder-like berries wearily over the waters, dominating the autumn tangle of sumach and green-brier; its putty-colored stalk one bristle of thorny spikes, it certainly looked every bit of its name. The small trees of the box-elder rustled their maple-like wings,

or keys, stirring uneasily with every gust. The iron-wood trees, covered with hop-like clusters, whispered something to the October wind that kept tirelessly wandering around them. The creepers, crowning the rail-fence with crimson, gave the tops of the cross-rails the appearance, thrust over the intertangling bosks and bushes, of being the feathered and scarlet-fluttering heads of hidden Indians watching where,

Clung o'er with cockle-burrs and thorny seeds,
Sad Autumn dreamed among her feathering weeds.

November 4th. The purple and white ray flowers of the wild asters are transformed into round, gray-brown witch-heads of gossamer seeds that nod and beckon fantastically,

shimmering, a silver gauze, in the afternoon sunlight. The oaks retain their leaves longer than any of the other trees, loath to disrobe themselves, and reddening with rage and shame that the month demands it of them. Their boughs and branches twinkle bronze and ruddy gold with every movement of the wind. Stalwart they hold the hills, a host, whose blood-red banners are advanced far above the other trees, and whose bronze-dark armor glitters as 't were for battle.

To-day, November 10th, I found the yellow primrose freshly blooming on its tall green stalk,— a fairy moon, it seemed, shining by day amid a firmament of aster stars. I also found, covering, balloon-like, the sere masses of briers with many feathery pompons, — their centres showing a

single black point, — the puffball seed-heads of the wild clematis. Near by, the slender stream was clocked with ice, the frozen road was seamed with silver ruts.

1901-1905

I NEVER see an old farmhouse with its Quaker-like front and its old-fashioned kitchen garden full of flowers and simples and vegetables, but it reminds me of the good gray Quaker poet and certain lines of his, beautiful and true, come to my mind; lines, that, as it were, epitomize his creed: —

> "For still in mutual sufferance lies
> The secret of true living;
> Love scarce is love that never knows
> The sweetness of forgiving."

April 10th, 1901. What tipplers the bees and the flies and even the

ants are! How fond are they of the saccharine in Nature! To-day I came upon a sugar maple which a woodpecker had drilled with several tiny holes, from which, sap-saturated, the sweet moisture was exuding; around these holes and down the dampened side of the tree trunk the bees, the flies, and the ants swarmed, like drunkards around a free and flowing tap, literally drowning themselves in the brew.

Around me on every side the spring-beauty, anemone, and bloodroot bloomed in multitudes, blurring, innumerable, their white stars here and there in galaxies over the ground, misty and nebulous from a distance. Occasionally I came upon a precocious spray of Dutchman's-breeches, or wild bleedingheart, hung frailly with delicately transparent shell-like blossoms. The Virginia cowslip was also putting forth its tufts of heaven-

blue, — belfried bells, seemingly, that call the fairies to prayer. The leaves, adder-mottled, of the dog's-tooth violet speared the loam here and there, — a myriad brown-blotted beaks of green. Not a wood violet did I see. The spicewood with its yellow buds and the red-bud with its purplish blooms gave or loaned color to the drab background of the yet unleafing brush and trees. A proletarian, bent on gathering early honey, on filling his fairy sack, the bulky bee went booming by. I stopped a moment to see him rumble and tumble among the pussy-willows in a little hollow, green-spread with a grassy carpet patterned with wildflowers, smelling of honeyed musk, like the fragrant dressing-room of Spring.

April 27th, 1901. The expanding sheaths of the leaves of the lirioden-

dron, or tulip tree, are like pale velvety green fingers, umber-tipped, pointing heavenward — or is it to passing April, or approaching May? They are covered with an adhering and balsamic gum, giving them a varnished golden appearance. More truly speaking they are of a silvery, fuzzy golden appearance — but what words can describe adequately or impart perfectly the impression of the colors which Spring employs in painting her young leaves and her flowers?

And there are the cherry trees! What wonders, what marvels of whiteness! Black-heart and white-heart heaping their huge drifts of snowy blossoms. I never beheld anything more beautiful than are these beautiful trees this spring. Their odorous snow intoxicates the air and ravishes the senses; bee, bird, and breeze make their great mounds, like

motionless clouds anchored to earth, murmurous and revelous haunts of melody.

Near a pond a maple tree stands crimson as if Autumn had touched it with fiery finger, instead of Spring; giving flame to its numberless dangling double-winged keys or seed pods, out of whose rosy clusters the pearly points of the sprouted leaves project — tips of tiny candles that will soon glow with emerald green. The whole tree gives one the impression of a flaming torch, but burning from the bottom upwards instead of from the top downwards.

I catch the fragrance of the blossoms of the plum tree now which is exactly that of new-made wine, a heliotrope and vanilla-like odor. No wonder that the bees and the butterflies are intoxicated with it and go reeling away in honeyed happiness after revelling in its blossoms a while.

The fragrance of the plum trees vies with that of the cherry trees. Nothing that I ever smelled is so delicately, so deliciously intoxicating as is their mingled perfume, borne by that great mixer the wind, from their masses of white bloom, in which the inebriate bees and breezes make perpetual murmur, and the birds drown themselves, their songs rising, like bubbles, from their fragrant deeps.

The lush green smell of the young grass, cool and warm at the same time, invites one to rest and dream on its emerald carpet. The blackbird's continual, vibrant, wire-like, metallic note creaks and creaks in the top of a sweet-gum tree like a rusty reed tuned in praise of spring.

Here in the damp places of the wood and the shadowy parts of the orchard one comes frequently upon

the succulent cones of the sponge mushroom, the earliest edible fungus of the year. On the hillside, in the woods, the dwarf larkspur, a watery blue and white, bristles with spurry spikes of blossoms. This spot of deadened wood and stumps is a regular rallying place for them. I stop a moment, seating myself upon a dead tree trunk. How curious are the worm-worn borings under the torn-off bark of a fallen and red-rotted tree! hieroglyphic and crooked and erratic as the lines that mark, I imagine, some antique gem of Arabia, the seal of some long-dead Sultan.

❁❁❁❁❁

"The noon was clouded, yet no shower fell
Though in her lids hung the sweet tears of May."

May is here. The red oak crimsons into tenderly velvet leaves, and

the white oak clothes itself in vair and mauve and lavender and rose. The indefinable, bittersweet, apple fragrance of the wild-crab blossoms makes every wind swoon with joy. No perfume cultivated by fashion is more refined or subtly haunting than is this wild-apple odor with which the May makes sweet her body.

❁❁❁❁❁

May 15th, 1901. Came upon an entire hillside of the bird's-foot violet. Their pansy-purple blossoms, scattered like sapphires among the moss and dead leaves under the soft unfolding velvet of the oaks, made a picture too beautiful for words to describe. I carried the memory of it home to the city with me and it has remained with me ever since.

❁❁❁❁❁

How curious looking are the curdled mud chimneys that the craw-

fish mason in the wet woods and clayey fields! Lying at the bottom of the hole which their chimney continues and protects, their great claws advanced threateningly before them, they remind me of some unimaginable monster of the fairy world; some elfin dragon or kraken, lying in wait for venturesome, lost, or belated fairykins, ready to seize them with their formidable talons and instantly devour. In the deeps of the marsh-wood, at night, I have heard him heaving up his hollow house, the rude wall of his oozy tower, a wet, vague sound of slime.

❁❁❁❁❁

How the various sounds of Nature haunt our memories! To-day, mid-May, standing listening to the rustling of the leaves of these trees, I cannot help thinking how different now is the sound of the movement

of their limbs, clothed in green, from what it was in February when, unwieldy and weighed down with crushing and incasing sleet, blown stiffly by the wind, the crystalline and crackling noise of their branches was as the sound of heavily moving silk.

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In Georgia, May 7th, 1902. Who was it said — was it Lorenzo the Magnificent? or who? —

"That on every side we find
Absence, as men say, estranges;
Fancy ranges as the eye ranges;
Out of sight is out of mind.

"Love departs and is not love;
As from sight the eye departs
Even so do hearts from hearts;
And at other hands we prove

"Fancies rove as the eyes rove,
Parted pleasures come again." —

And to me twofold they come here in beautiful May in beautiful

Georgia! Here you might truthfully say the brooks babble silver over bars of pearl and topaz, or drop lucid music into pools basined with crystal, for their very channels are paved with blocks and pebbles of spar. Their banks, covered with ferns as high, and often higher than a man's waist, lean over to admire the reflection of their own adornments, — glories of mountain laurel, with its calico-like clusters of blossoms, azaleas, sunset-colored, and wild honeysuckle, rose and cream, that mass themselves everywhere. The calicanthus and Solomon's-seal, bird's-foot violet, — great pools, as it were, of purple and azure poured from some huge cornucopia of color, — and the wild phlox, streaking the vistas of woods here and there with broad lines of lavender, seemingly bouquet the earth with blossoms in honor of the loveliest month of

spring. And over it all the wood-thrush, that liquid-throated lover of the leaves, pipes his mellowest, his most triumphant music, as if he, too, would give her praise — May, and lay his soul in song at her feet, heralding her presence to every breeze that blows, and to every tree and wild flower that grows, in notes as deep and crystal-cool and clear as her own eyes.

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Visited a whippoorwill's nest today, May 30th; one that I discovered about a week ago. The mother bird rose, fluttering almost from under my feet, and had I not known just where to look for them, I never would have been able to distinguish between the two little, light, red-brown balls of hairy down and the dead oak leaves on which they lay, almost completely concealed by the parent bird, before she quit her nest, under two brown

leaves. Quietly the two little grotesques lay, about a day old, with tightly closed eyes, huddled side to side, among the sere leaves. I carefully recovered them with the two brown leaves, and — to the relief of their parent, who kept up a continual fluttering among the neighboring underbrush — left them to become, doubtless in time, like herself, weird voices of the dusk, haunters, too, of the twilight.

❁❁❁❁❁

Circled with trees, in Indiana, I came upon a water, a forest pool, and sat an hour looking into it. Now and then I saw — was it a turtle? — or merely some strange water creature conjured up by my imagination? — a spraddle-legged, shell-backed shadow ferrying slowly through the cairngorm deeps. Then a little waggle-tailed frog — or was it a frog? or a fairy philosopher regarding me

through his goggle eye-glasses? — seated on a lily pad, addressed me in a high, piping voice, like a professor delivering a lecture. Here and there others took up his note, like a lot of mimicking students, bandying it back and forth raucously high or low, according to their size. Most of them were still very young; in the transitional stage — between tadpole and frog — and with their bass or tenor voices reminded me very much of an Apollo Club, in swallow-tailed suits, giving a full-dress, batrachian concert, each crouching gnome-like on his lily-leaf platform. When I moved they plunged precipitately into the pond, spattering the lily pads with rolling and glittering rounds of liquid brilliants — diamonds spilled on emerald mats.

Among these green, spectacled haunters of the pool, gnarled gnomes of the water, that meditate magic

each one in his own sorcerous circle of green lily leaf; in a shadowy place, under a trailing trumpet-vine, — a riot of June, clustered over, as it were, with splashes of tubular scarlet,

There was an old frog
Sat on a log
In the light of the crescent moon, aboon,
In the light of the pale new moon:
And he said to the crescent,
"My dear, look pleasant!
I 'm going to sing you a tune, real soon;
I am going to sing you a tune."

❁❁❁❁❁

The acrid, warm odor of the fields of white-top and wild carrot lay like a spell upon the land. Noon hummed and buzzed, grasshopper-like, at the wood's edge, or drowsily whistled, like a bob-white, from the harvest field, that slept, sultry with sunshine, in the heavy, hot fragrance of the blossoming elder; pelted with petals,

and the downy pearl blossoms of the flowering chestnut tree, that fell in long splashes of white, slenderly curved, as from a pale-towering, never-falling fountain.

So let Noon lead me till at last she reaches
That spot where Evening tarries brown
Beneath the trees, through which the sunset bleaches;
Deep in a wood of ancient oaks and beeches,
Where I may lay me down,
With all the loveliness that Nature teaches,
And watch Night crown her with her starry crown.

❁❁❁❁❁

Violet mists of the rain veiling with vapor the distant hills and valleys, checkered here and there with great blurs and streaks of interchanging sunlight and shadow as the dark blue clouds of wind and rain roll heavily over them. The woods and ways are literally spangled with but-

terflies of all descriptions, colors, sizes, and shapes: small and large; brown and moth-mottled with dim and dusty blues and blacks; terra-cotta-colored and copper-marked; scarlet and seal and gold, making gay the stalks of withered weeds as with a sudden, a magic burst of strange and tropical blossoms.

❁❁❁❁❁

The catbird says — "Sweet — you, sweet — you, sweet — you! Very sweet — you, you, you! Sweet, sweet!"

Nature is full of voices; some heard; some unheard; all of them eloquent of loveliness, happy or melancholy, preaching or singing the gospel of the beautiful.

❁❁❁❁❁

Yesterday, walking in the woods of autumn, the wind kept up a continual whispering around me, as if

desirous of communicating some old and awful trouble to my soul. When it discovered that I could not or would not understand, it cried angrily in the trees, withering through the sere, red, restless oaks, complaining to them of something sadder than life. The witch-faced moon of day looked down upon the faded forest like the ghost of old tragedy weary unto wonder. The smoky, dun, and drab-colored woodlands, that belted the hill, lifted up imploring arms of ashen branches, as if beseeching heaven to spare them; the sunlight of the afternoon piercing them with its chilly gold in broad gray blades of mournful and dusty-looking light.

❁❁❁❁❁

Nemophilist that I am, I also am a lover of the fields, of the meadows; especially after a night of rain when the clean green of the autumn fallows

is dotted with the meadow mushrooms, holding up, each one, its white pileus, like parasols of the elves, ribbed with delicate pink gills. And when

> Above the hills the sunset 's rolled
> One long deep streak of lurid gold,

from the nemorous side of a hill, over the waving plumes of goldenrod and aster, I have often fancied I could see, in lamels of refulgent armor, the eidolon of the autumn day beckoning me on to follow, over the glittering meadows, into some wonder world of mystery and magic, towering, shadowy gold and fire, beyond the sunset's clouds and mists of purple and flame.

❁❁❁❁❁

March 17th, 1903. For the first time this year, here in Kentucky, today I heard the hylodes piping in the

marshy places: those elfin music-makers of March, fairy horn-blowers heralding the approach of Spring.

A myriad golden-thighed honey-bees, with one great black bumblebee, — burly and crapulous choragus of the Bacchic chorus, — were zooming and booming among the fluffy, furry catkins of the willows that hung, a green-gold mist, along the borders of a stream; the fragrance and honey of the pussy-willows had made boisterous Bacchantes of them all.

The chortling orchestration of the hylodes; the warbling of the bush-sparrow in tufting cottonwoods; the violet, breaking azure over the sod; the moist spring smell of the fresh new grass, and glimmer of the catkins, combined to form a symphony of sounds, aromas, and colors that no man-made music could ever equal.

Cobwebs, iridescent in the sunlight, streamed by, the tattered and rent

remnants of the banners of elfdom, caught here and there on the withered weeds of last year: or shimmered in broken arches, the gossamer bridges of fairyland; or floated slowly away in torn shreds, shattered rainbows of the fays.

The cottonwoods' blooms made the winds haunting and balsam-sweet, smelling like the Balm-of-Gilead, and sonorous with the joy of a thousand busy honey-bees.

❁❁❁❁❁

March 18th, 1903. Wildflowers, everywhere, up in profusion. Within a few feet of each other I found anemones, spring-beauties and wood-violets blooming, and the adder's-tongue, or dog's-tooth violet, showing its brown-freckled leaf.

The trees were perfect clerestories for the birds, whence the bluebird, the robin, the wren, sap-sucker, spar-

row, catbird and redbird chorused their songs, to which the meadow-lark, like a priest before the altar celebrating the High Mass of Spring, antiphoned responses.

Suddenly, in a shadowy opening of the trees, I glimpsed the bluebell, or Virginia cowslip, its porcelain-like, purple-pink heads of clustered buds bowing heavily over the lush green stem of greener leaves — promises of beauty that the month, a week hence, shall behold perfect and blushing beneath the million leaf-points of the beeches.

A little further on, in a hollow of sodden loam and leaf the bloodroot lifted its virgin chalices of hollow snow, making the moist, musk-haunted aisles of the cathedral-like forest holy with its pale, lamp-like flowers — the spiritual presences, as it were, of many little sangraals. Or here a clumped colony of the twin-

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leaf, hardly distinguishable from the bloodroot, immaculate, with sloping, white, half-open blossoms, tapered through the enfolding leaves like frail candles of souls celebrating the advent of spring.

> The bloodroot leaves of middle March
> Lift up their blooms, each one a torch
> Of creamy crystal in whose white
> The calyx is a golden light.

❁❁❁❁❁

March 23d, 1903. The toothwort, with its white, four-petaled flowers, variegates, along with the spring-beauty, the floor of the forest under the bourgeoning beeches: amid their delicate enameling, a solitary star, one dog's-tooth violet mosaics its pearl-pallid blossom; a stray from the innumerable host that, like some invasion, pierces and spears the shady hillside with countless bronze-speckled points of leaves.

A storm is rising. The bare boughs roar and tumult with the rushing winds of March. The phalanxes of dead leaves panic before it in galloping skeleton thousands, rustling wildly in withered flight. Winds, — vaunt couriers of the clouds that roll up in black battalions, — sweep the booming boughs, announcing terrific things to the reeling trees, whose tops bow down and, billowing, swirl and swing, doing obeisance to the storm. And now the full force of the tempest is among them; ruin-footed it stalks with enormous strides, crashing and clashing their rumbling trunks together as if they were so many reeds. There is a noise as of hurling and hurrying hands, the trampling of gigantic feet, the roaring of riven oak, of rended beech, ponderous, protesting, in terrified and awful pain, sounding hugely over it all, over

the wild roar and wilder rush of rain.

❁❁❁❁❁

March 26th, 1903. The amber-green of the sassafras blossom glints in the sunlight, tufting with flame the dark and leafless boughs, and drenching the air with subtle and spicy fragrance. The wild-bleeding-heart, the harbinger of spring, the anemone, yellow and blue violets, spring-beauty, bloodroot, hepatica, and the budded pendants of the bluebells enamel the wood floor with white and gold, pink and azure. Here also the starry eyes of the adder's-tongue, bashful as a little Puritan's, look demurely down. And the celandine-poppy scatters its nuggets of early gold prodigally among the underwoods, or employs its natural alchemy to cover with ingots of young yellow the trickling hillside, gleaming here and there amid the dead leaves and mossy rocks like

Croppings out of unmined gold,
Of secret wealth no man hath told.

Moist, rocky places of the spring,
Rich with dark woodland loam,
Where hosts of golden poppies cling
And breaks the bloodroot's and the twinleaf's foam.

The mossy hillside's bulging rocks
O'er which the fragile white-heart flocks,
Whose penciled leaves and shell-shaped blooms
Seem fancies from the fairies' looms.

The hairy stems of the hepatica,
Beneath the wahoo-bush and leafing haw,
Nod delicate as the heads of elfin maids
Of fairy tales who haunt the forest glades;

And bluets, like a Naiad's eyes adream,
Assert their azure by the woodland stream;
And, where the wind-flower braved the winds of March,
The poppy lights its golden torch.

Come dance, come flaunt yourselves, ye
wild little wind-flowers of March!
And, poppies, come light their way with
the hollow gold of your torch!

March 31st, 1903. The mole-heaved turf that smells of spring; the gummy gold and green and Balm-of-Gilead scented leaf-buds of the cottonwoods, — shelling their crisp cusps, blown hither and thither by the wind of late March, — languor the air with indescribable essence that softly weighs upon one's eyelids, soothing them to sleep. I lie beneath a great cottonwood by the Ohio, gazing at the sky through its boughs and breathing the essence of spring distilled from the breeze-swung censers of its blossoms, crimson turning to gold-gray, tasselling the huge room of its branches. The curled bronze and black, as if burned, sticky with aromatic gum, of the leaf-bud

sheaths scatter the sand and the young grass on which I lie.

❋❋❋❋❋

April 6th, 1903. Great white-heart cherry trees drifted with snow of blossoms and pelting the passer-by with flying flakes of petals. The buckeye tree, the great horse-chestnut, is a huge candelabrum of leaf-buds, each bud a point of fragrant bronze infolding pale gold, a compact and imprisoned flame, gummy and glistening with spring and sap in the sunlight of early April. The balsam-pungent smell of the leaf-cusps of the cottonwoods resembles spice blown from the lattices of oriental harems. Not "blossom by blossom" does spring begin here, but with a rush, a very tempest of blossoms. Gill-over-the-ground, dentaria, starwort, golden corydalis, mertensia, celandine, trillium, wake-robin

and bluet, regiment on regiment, host on host, literally storm the bewildered woodlands with their blossoms. High among them, like a purple oriflamme, flutter the violet clusters of the Jacob's-ladder.

❀❀❀❀❀

April 8th, 1903. The Lepidoptera, — some very large, some very small, — black and brown and blue, make the Judas-tree, with its cloud of rosy blossoms, a little world of flutter and of frenzy. By goes a great dragon-fly, the first of the season, like a bolt from a cross-bow. Everywhere is the mirth, the babble and bubble, the gurgle and whisper of woodland waters, mingled with the jubilation of birds and the clapping of leaf-hands, the contented rubbing together of rustling boughs and branches as if in applause.

I came into a wind-torn wood of oaks, over whose rocky and rooty

floor, sparsely scattered, shone the first wan stars of the bluets, and whiter than blurs of frost, the blossoms of the white wild-plantain. Oaks, oaks, all around me oaks, donning their velvet vestments of pink and purple and gold — the young, unfolding leaves and yet unblossoming buds, long and silken, of their clustered flowers.

Far off, from the valley below, rose a vague chirping, the reedy notes of the hylodes, like an orchestra of fairy flutes tuned in time to the swift steps of Spring. Their music, suggestive to me of pale gray, glaucous golden bubbles blown all in the same direction by the wind, now rose, now fell, with every passing breeze.

Through the satiny amber and lavender and rose mists of the leafing oaks, tasselled with golden-green of blossoms, the occasional dogwoods

showed brownish blurs of buds trying to be white. And against a dark background of leafless woods the sassafras, breaking into chrysoprase, gleamed glassy golden.

The hillside and the valley seemed streaked and blotted with ochre and umber, grayish green and violet, dim lilac and amber hues, where Spring had touched the winter-washed boughs of the woodlands. And climbing the hills and invading the hollows, clothed in the colors of happiness, like attendants in her rosy train, peach orchard and cherry orchard glowed in raiment of pink and pearl.

❁❁❁❁❁

April 27th, 1903. The early, dusty gray-green of the budded birch has been succeeded by a glistening and glimmering emerald-green, amid which the catbird and the bluebird have gone mad with joy.

With the first warm days of April came the large blue and gray dragon-flies, flitting and whirring erratically over the ponds and the pools and creeks. Whence do they come? From the South, I suppose; for suddenly they are here, and no one has seen them come; probably brought hither on the wings of the wind that beat about my roof last night with plaintive rain.

The two blossoms that God made alike, the bloodroot and the twinleaf, are now no more. The dogwood dazzles the woods, a steadfast form of snow and light that keeps guard at the gateway of the Courts of Spring and poses brilliantly for our admiration. The tender pink and delicate mauve of the spotted leaves of the wild-grape, roofing with twilight the saplinged hillside, — where like lamps of gold the celandine-poppies are scattered, — build a

green temple within whose sanctuary sunbeams glimmer, like spirits worshipping and offering up flowery sacrifice to the maiden Spring. At its entrance, like Galahad the pure knight, in armor of dazzling whiteness, stands the blossoming dogwood.

❁❁❁❁❁

Deep in the leaves' concealing green
A wood-thrush flutes,
The first thrush seen
Or heard this spring, and straight, me-
seems,
Its notes take on the attributes
Of mythic fancies and of dreams —
A faun goes piping o'er the roots
And mosses, gliding through dim gleams
And glooms, and while he glides he flutes,
Though still unseen,
'Mid thorny berry and wild-bean.

❁❁❁❁❁

The ripened heads of the rattlesnake plantain nod their touseled tufts

of thistledown at me, — or is it at the little blue butterflies that flutter around them? — as if they knew a thing or two about what happens among their stalks in the light of the May moon when the little people are abroad, and the cricket makes dance-music for them.

The dewberries are blooming now:
The days are long; the nights are short;
The dogwood blossom from its bough
Drops snowy petals, heart by heart,
Here where she laid 'gainst mine her brow
When we did part.

Soon where the dewberries' blossoms gleam
The berries red will, ripening, glow;
And if the dogwood by the stream
Did ever bloom, no one will know,
And she, too, seem a vanished dream
Of long ago.

Nature-Notes

The yellow star-flower shows its gold
Among the trees, half hid in grass;
Already do the leaves grow old;
Already doth the springtime pass;
And last year's leaf hath turned to mould,
As love, alas!

The crowfoot blossom lifts its eyes
Of amber hue from 'round my feet;
The bluet apes the Mayday skies
With glances blue as they are sweet,
Here where last spring we met with sighs,
No more to meet.

❁❁❁❁❁

Purple the hills stretch under purple mists,
A damson-frosted purple that persists
Even in the valley, darkling there that lies —
No bluer black hath night, no darker dyes.

The low gray clouds, whose edges are thinned,
And spun
By the sun
And the wind,
How they swirl and curl
And furl and unfurl
Into lawny lengths of snow and pearl!

Now feathering white as the moon-mists
do,
For the wind and the sun to tempest
through,
Now closing over,
Cloud-cover on cover,
Deep azure chasms of fringing blue.

❋❋❋❋❋

The cedars are breaking into gold. Their dark green sprays are flushed with the young gold of May, tufted and spined and edged as with amber-flickering fire.

❋❋❋❋❋

It is like coming upon a bit of the Orient, a dream of Samarcand or Bagdad, to come upon this clump of great crimson- and orange-headed poppies, sultry with slumber and magnificently indolent in the sunlight. Their sullen hearts, — opium-pollened, smooth, deep brown or purple-black, — they hold up and open, languid and beautiful courte-

sans, to every passing bee, inviting them to drug themselves and dream within their voluptuous bosoms. Me, too, they have drugged: days shall pass, months, perhaps years, and still shall the memory of their beauty haunt me — their faces of henna-colored flame; or, raimented in ruby, their bosoms of fire, sullen-centred with hearts of powdery purple.

❁❁❁❁❁

Hark how the honey-throated thrush
With notes of limpid harmony
Scatters the noonday's liquid hush,
Taking the woods with witchery.
Hid in the foliage deeps of green
He flutes his wildwood notes serene,
Like some tree-spirit, lost, unseen.

❁❁❁❁❁

May 15th, 1903. Deep-hearted peonies, soft-souled as sleep and gorgeous as a dream that comes tricked out in Shakespeare's fancy, now make sumptuous the garden ways.

Holding up their heavy, dew-jewelled gowns of crumpled crimson or cream, they stand, stately as the Athenian ladies in Midsummer-Night's Dream smiling at their lovers.

The milk-white stars of the water-lilies peep from between the green pads of the pond, at whose edge the sparrow and the thrush are taking their morning bath, preening with wet beaks their backs and wings and breasts.

Bubbles of bursting coolness rise between the lily-leaves, marking the way the gold carp goes, a crimson blur, a rosy shadow, a slow, strange streak of chilly flame, moving dimly under the lilies in the smoky crystal of the waters.

Giant irises clump and crowd the water's edge. Their beautiful blossoms, azure and white, are the huge notes of a soundless symphony under whose spell the water seems to sleep.

The ground is strewn with the dead oak-bloom,
Brown and withered as autumn broom:
And there, in a hollow of the hills,
Like a giant pearl in a giant hand,
Is a white-washed hut where an old man tills
A barren acre of barren land.
An arid acre, that soon shall blow
With wild-rose crimson and elder snow.

❁❁❁❁❁

I unlabyrinthed to-day a little worm no larger than a pin's head that had caused a weed's stem to swell and swell, eating its long, larval way through the heart of the weed.

That little worm shall become a fly,
And sing and sting 'neath the summer sky;
Or a gnat, like that which grows in the gall
High on the oak leaf there — a ball
That the elves shall loose and toss over all
Merrily under the next new moon; —

When it 'll grow itself wings and a sting
and a tune,
Stinging and singing its way into June.

❁❁❁❁❁

The cow-spit flecks the ragweed's stem with frothy white, a slimy foam with which a flat green worm seems to deluge itself pumping it up out of the green of the weed. It reminds me of certain novelists whose impossible styles are literally overwhelmed with the froth and fury of their fictions.

The red clay of the road is bored and heaved up by some sort of insect, a mining hornet, or spider hiding from a hornet, to which the bug in the weed, drowned in its own spittle, bears some resemblance. Each has its own little world to live in, whether it be a hole in the earth or a hole in a weed.

Nature-Notes

May 16th, 1903. Bells of the blossoming huckleberries ringing their inaudible white music up and down the Maytime hills, and a million bluets blooming, among whose blossoms one gold-thighed bee goes roaming,

Invite my soul to rest awhile
And dream beneath their azure smile.

The smell of tannin in the ozoned air
Under the oaks when the woods are green,
And the scent of the soil and moisture where
The young leaves dangle and make a screen,
Where the hiding wood-nymph combs her hair,
Have breathed me full of the Faun again,
And made me kin to the wind and rain.

The stealthy squirrel skips along;
The bush-bird lifts its twilight song;
The great frog sounds his resonant gong
At nightfall.

The small wood-gnat, that stings and flies,
And drowns itself for rage in your eyes,
Sings and whines and thinly cries
At nightfall.

The hairy spiders, that crouch outside
Their earth-bored lairs, now stealthily glide,
Or spin great webs for the moths that hide
Till nightfall.

❁❁❁❁❁

May 17th, 1903. Three birds have followed and haunted my steps all the afternoon. First, a catbird, singing a pæan in praise of the day, filled with a passion of splendid sunlight and warm wind, perched in the top of a cottonwood whose woolly wisps are blown like fragments of fleece through the air. Second, a song-sparrow, small and sweet, lilting a

pensive little lay, small and sweet as itself, a tinkle, as it were, a silvering down of dewy notes. Thirdly, a crimson-winged blackbird, repeating monotonously its one strident, persistently piercing and importunate note, emphasized occasionally by prolonging the expression "sweet" into "s-w-e-e-e-e-t," or is it "sweet-er-ee," or "o-ka-lee"?

❋❋❋❋❋

Colorado, June 12th, 1903. The pools of water left by the rain of last night in the rocks of the mountains are the mirrors over which the Oreads braid their hair, heavy with the wet of the mountain mists and twined with the mountain flowers. I can fancy them, white and naked as the stars that haunt the loftiest peaks, leaning like lilies over these pools, by the moon's cold light, wondering and marvelling at their own wild love-

liness, their eyes shining through their locks, — dark and dishevelled, — as the mountain dawn breaks, violet-gray, through scud of streaming storm.

❋❋❋❋❋

October 28th, 1903. Autumn is with us. She who endears herself to us through her decay. Again the sober brown carpet of the leaves rustles on the forest floors. Once more, here in Kentucky, the long bronze-green blurs and streaks, stealthily serpentine, of the duckweed marble the sluggish streams and pools with copperas hues, making of each a huge moss-agate, under the clear lemon and burnt brown of the beeches. Again the huckleberry bushes seem turned into garnet and ruby, their leaves, colored with carmine and vermilion, cover each bush, making it burn like that from which God addressed Moses.

Again the moss, crisp, dry and gray, starred here and there with plushy green, makes mute the step. Again the acorns sow the way, falling continually, and crunching and crackling under the feet, along with the burrs of the beech and chestnut now emptied of their nuts. Again the oleander-colored skies of sunset, seen through the columned iron of the oaks, invite the soul to wander and lose itself in the forest of dreams and shadows. The blue-winged wasp and the yellow-winged grasshopper seem aweary of their own singing. The bush-clover, tired of its papilionaceous, pink blossoms, is converting them rapidly into links of flat green burrs that loosen and cling to all that touches them. Burr-marigolds besiege the woodland ways, bristling an army of brown burr-heads, dishevelled spikes of forked thorns. Flame-flecked leaves, or

leaves stained with blood-red fire, flutter and fall around us, heaping the path that leads to the leaf-clogged stream, reflecting all the sorrow and savagery of the year, the cinnabar of the burning-bush, the scarlet of the sumachs, — already half-stripped of their leaves, — and the crimson and gold of the maples. Now and then one catches the pungent, alkali odor, so characteristic of autumn, of burning wood and weeds; and in the twilight, dotting it like the eyes of some forest animal, the distant smoulder or flare of a brush-fire. And then at night — with what a feeling of awe we walk the autumn woods! What wonders, what whispers walk with us! Death and Melancholy and Decay, mysterious and invisible companions of the rain and the wind, seem never weary of telling us of the sorrow, the sadness of existence, complaining ceaselessly to the sighing and weep-

ing trees and the unhappy and dying flowers.

❁❁❁❁❁

Where the rain that comes at night tip-toes in its whispering gown, the briers are bruised and veined with bronze and blood;

> Each leaf is marked with fire
> And flame makes fierce each spire.

The oaks sullen into swarthy crimson; or, masses of brown and bronze, they sombre themselves against the ember-smouldering West.

❁❁❁❁❁

Yesterday among the beeches, to-day
among the oaks:
Those with their emerald and gold,
Their amber golds and grays,
These with their blood-dark bronze,
Translucent, frosty reds:
The gold the Autumn dons,
The blood her sad heart sheds,
As slow she goes her ways;
Sheds at each step, that cloaks
Each pool that glimmers cold,

Sunk in the woodland mould,
'Mid the oaks, of whose russets and reds
Winds make their beds,
Bowing their withered heads,
That are old, so old,
Where the Autumn cons,
In her golds and grays,
Her Book of Days.

The wind is rising and the leaves are blown,
Wild, swallow-high, reluctant still to fall,
Swarming from hill to hill; and over all
The sere, wild-sounding oaks a voice calls lone,
As if the wood some ancient word were sighing,
Some unintelligible word of beauty dying.

The dawn comes in clad all in hodden gray,
And, like a tattered cloak its wildness wears,

The ragged rain sweeps stormily this way:
The acorn, like a bullet, strikes the soil;
And blown from its wild pod the milk-weed's plume,
Wan in the ghostly and the gusty gloom,
Flares like a lamp hand-hollowed of trembling toil.

NOVEMBER 12th, 1904.

Hylas, that pipe the little buds awake;
The shrill hylodes, how they sing
Before the wind-flower and the bloodroot shake
Their twinkling stars frail in the locks of Spring.

The rose-bruised blue of the bluebell's buds
Will soon make gay the hem of her gown;
Green as the green of the young oak woods
With changing tints of mauve and brown.

And soon will golden poppies cling
  In woodland places deep with loam,
And we shall glimpse the feet of Spring —
  White in the twinleaf's flowers of foam.

And all the hillside's rugged rocks
  She 'll shower with shell-shaped white-
    heart blooms,
Shaken from out her radiant locks,
  As down she comes through greenwood
    glooms.

Spring is late this year. It is now March 12th, and hardly a bud or blossom is to be seen anywhere in field or forest; not a wildflower, neither harbinger-of-spring, spring-beauty, nor anemone. All is still sere and sad in the bare brown of the windy woods. Not even a violet to push aside the dead leaves and open its baby eyes to the stormy sunlight. Only Spring's presence, or is it her approach? — is evidenced by the warm, wet smell of turf and loam and

leaf — the aroma that haunts her gown's green hem brushing here and there the edges of the woods; and by the sunlight basking white on the hilltops — the slow silver of her delaying feet.

Still are the forests barren of all buds,
And all the woods of wildflowers; but, behold!
Within a week or less the invading hosts,
Myriad and many as the stars of heaven,
Shall utterly invade these woodland ways,
When every foot of soil shall show and boast
Its bud or blossom or balsam-beakéd leaf,
Bragging of beauty to the passer-by,
Beggared and bankrupt of all words to praise.

❁❁❁❁❁

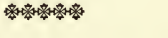
Come, let us forth and homage her,
Clothed on with warmth and musk and myrrh,
The indescribable odor wild that clings
Around her like a garment: let us sing

Songs to her, glad as grass and all the things
Exulting in her presence — greening things
And airy that have gotten them new wings:
Come, let us forth and give our praise to Spring.

The flowers now are holding their public pomps and pageants making gay the worlds of the woods. Warm scents of rain and of sun, of loam and of leaf courier their coming, and the wind is a herald's bugle, bannered with the blue of heaven, sounding before them.

My mind 's washed clean by the wind that brings
The wild warm scent of the woods on its wings,
The racy sweets of the bourgeonings
Of flower and tree and brier that clings.

My head I bare to the winds that blare,
That blow from the purple heart of the cloud,
Now low, now loud,
From the heart of the cloud, like a giant's hair,
Blown everywhere,
Blue-black and low,
Heavy with rain and the pearly glow
Of sunlight gulfing its deeps with snow.—
Blow, winds of spring! O blow, blow, blow!
Caress my brow like fingers fair,
Cool fingers touching my eyes and hair!
Blow, spring winds, blow! O blow, blow, blow!
Blow out of my soul all cark and care!
And out of my heart, aye! out of my heart, despair!



The wind goes groping among the trees,
Telling the bees
Where the little buds open that no one sees.

At intervals, as softly cool it blows,
The wild-plum shows
Its bee-swarm'd clusters 'twixt the wood's dark rows.

❁❁❁❁❁

The sluggish snake now basks his uncoiled length
Beside the windings of the water-course;
With torpid beady eyes he lies and dreams
Where warm the sunlight sleeps. Near by him claws
Of some strange beast have marked the furrowed sand
As with deep talonings of mighty rage
Here on the wild road where it fords the stream.

❁❁❁❁❁

Rocked by the winds of March the trees become,
Each one a maddened pendulum
Swayed every way as if in time
To some wild music, roaring rhyme
Shouted from storm-tossed hill to hill,
Amid the forests that are never still.

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What dance is wilder than that the dead leaves dance, made frantic by

the winds of March? What music more welcome than the bucksaw sound of the hylas chorusing a song in praise of spring in the flooded bottom-lands and marshy pools of the valleys? Or what is rosier than the rosy tassels that tag the sugar tree when it lifts itself like a banner unfurled in the very forefront of the advancing armies of spring?

March 27th, 1905. I found the hepatica with its twisted hairy stems and three-lobed leaves blooming retiredly at the protecting base of an old beech, hidden, or trying to hide, in a rooty angle of lichen and leaves and moss. A peculiarity of these hepatica blossoms is that they are a delicate pink, almost white, and not blue — the color generally attributed to the liverwort.

Think of the strength of the sprouting germ of such a tender and frail thing as a wildflower! lifting or displacing a clod, or even a small stone often with its pointed bud; piercing with its slender green the superimposed layers of dead leaves as a needle might; and not till they are pierced, unfolding the large beauty of its leaf. Thus to-day I noted many of the leaves of the adder's-tongue, or dog's-tooth violet, collared or ruffed curiously with a collar or ruff of dead leaves, which they had neatly and completely pierced.

The spicewood bush is now in bloom. Its yet leafless branches are illuminated with many fuzzy little flowers, lights of pale amber, aromatic as some oriental pastil.

The gold-green blooms of the spicebush burn
Lighting the wood at every turn;

Like the starry tufts of the sassafras,
Whose fragrance thrills us as we pass,
From out their patens of gold they spill
A faint aroma that haunts the hill.

How late joy is in coming! late as is the young hickory to don its raiment of green and gold; whereas it should be rathe as the redbud that, a month ago, flaunted a mass of rejoicing rose, making happy the otherwise barren forestside: or as the pawpaw that, days ago, gladdened the woods with its bells of deep, dark bronze, belfrying its leafless boughs where the winds hung, like bell-ringers, ringing the month's marriage peals.

Placid and pure and clean the wild-phlox
blooms
Make glad the hillsides and deep-wooded
banks

Of wandering creeks. Beneath the old, gray beech
The Mayapples, in myriad colonies,
Advance-guards of the wildflowers' following hosts,
Lift up their green-and-umber tents of leaves,
Each unrolled tent tipped with its furled-up flag,
Its pea-like bud, a knob of delicate green,
Wherein the milk-white, — blazoned deep with gold, —
Of its broad bloom, its banner 's packed away.
While at the wood's edge, at the turn o' the lane,
A clear, a chilly crimson in its keys,
Its million blooms, the maple fairly glows,
Making a crystal blur of rosy gloom;
Wherein the bluebird, like a sapphire closed
In an enormous ruby, sits and sings;
Upon his back and on his wayward wings
The lapis-lazuli o' the April sky.

April 5th, 1905.

Who is it knows
How the huckleberry grows,
Blooms and blows? —
Only the bird that sings and sings,
Waving its wings,
Saying, "Come see it where it swings!
Ruddy green and amber rose,
See, oh, see,
In honor of Spring,
Under this tree,
See how they ring
Their tiny bells, that cluster out,
Silvery red, in a rosy rout."

In the poorest soil of the hillside, amid rocks, felled wood, and mosses, I found the bird's-foot violet with its pansy-like blossoms, purple and blue, scattered and glowing like vari-colored sapphires. And under the April crimson that the oaks had donned the yellow puccoon made bright the barren ways of the waste hillside. On May the 1st, I found its tubular gold, like little trumpets of the elves,

held up, as if ready to salute me with golden announcement, by every roadside and in the grassless places of the hills.

The bright star-of-Bethlehem, immaculate white, fixed its shining eye upon me, — like the bright eyes of adventure, — here and there, looking out of every grassy place I passed as from a green, small firmament all its own.

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May 5th, 1905. The dead-leaf carpet of the underwoods, — covered white with the dropped petals of the fallen and drifted blossoms of the dogwoods, — is as if it were flaked with snow. Here and there amid their white the tall, spadixed blossoms of the Indian-turnip are seen, green and purple, or bluish white striped with clear gray-green.

The wood, this morning, is invaded of snails. An elfin army, black,

gray, and brown, thrusting forth their horns, like some strange weapon of defence, their shells looking like so many queer knapsacks, they storm the stumps of the trees, swarm over the roads, and scatter their skirmishers among the rocks and roots of the forest, investing everything before them, leaf and blossom and fungus. Three I found attacking a single leaf, two thirds of which had already disappeared. At another place a great reddish brown snail was busy devouring what seemed at first to be a caterpillar and which afterwards proved to be a long, fuzzy, yellow blossom; the watery red of the snail and the golden-white of the blossom producing quite a peculiar color effect.

What if curses should fall as thickly as snails come after a rainy night in early May? Irresistible as the impulse of spring to leaf and blos-

som and bear and bless us with the beautiful — what if this impulse should suddenly take the opposite course, producing, instead of the beautiful, the terrible and the horrible, like this slimy vermin swarming over the woodland ways!

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Who will tell me why ants are continually and persistently climbing the trees? wandering here and there, irresolutely, indefinitely, at a loss as to what they are seeking, over the flat broad surfaces of the leaves; and at length reaching the topmost twig of a branch, or a leaf, or of the tree, turning and retracing their way just as hurriedly downward? There are no aphides, no insect kine for them to stroke and milk; no honey-dew, no gummy sweetness perceptible that might attract them. Can it be that the fascination, the curiosity to see

how the earth looks from a great height lures and compels them, too, as it often does us mortals?

May 18th, 1905. The strawberry-bush (running euonymus) is now in full bloom; covered with five-petaled, flat, fleshy, green flowers which shall eventually evolve the crimson-burred pods, packed with scarlet seeds, of early autumn.

Like a carcanet of living and graceful emerald, the green snake glides across my way; silently sinuous, moving swiftly to the upper twigs of the euonymus; under which, lumbering along slowly beneath its mottled and incasing shell, a land-turtle rustles over and through the leaves — an ungainly bulk, whose rubber-colored neck and feet and tail protrude grotesquely from the shell, into which at a movement

of my foot they are instantly withdrawn.

I found the shin-leaf with its rocket-like flowers of white-blue blossoming in the open woods to-day. On it, like a Japanese design, sat a butterfly, wings outspread, the sumptuous coloring of which defies description.

The first heavy-headed stalks of the beard's-tongue, lilac and white, plume with orchid-like blossoms the fields and the forest ways.

Here on the slope of the hill, sheltering under the oaks, fresh as the break of day, and breathing rainy fragrance around, I found the innumerable wild-rose blooming, each one a round pink yawn of perfume, young and fresh and sweet as the young, sweet, dewy beauty of a baby's mouth.

The wild-potato vine, too, I found in full bloom; its large chalices, white cups of opaque crystal, spotting

and dotting the open fields and vistas of the woods. The wild-parsley, with its lacy, gracefully penciled umbels, hedged with tall gold the banks of a creek that slid tinkling from the gloom, from the hillside where, in patches, among the rocks, like outcroppings of gold, shining in the sunlight, yellowed the blossoms of the puccoon.

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The blossoms of the shin-leaf, hued and shaped like forget-me-nots, on the tops of their stiff, prim-looking stalks, tower gracefully from the low whorl of their large mullein-like leaves. Not far away the goat's-rue, with its papilionaceous flowers, looking like many saffron and rose colored butterflies, makes glorious the rocky hillside sloping to the little creek singing, like a happy child amid its gathered wildflowers, unseen in the woody hollow.

Snug in its curled-up leaf the spider hides, safe from the searching mud-wasp, whining impatiently, flitting from flower to leaf. The blue-winged wasp and the yellow-winged grass-hopper seem to be the only insects awake here where in countless numbers the wild onion blooms. Like the insects, the blossoms too seem asleep; their six-petaled, star-shaped flowers, pale lavender, almost white, dot the distance dimly. Their knob-like seeds on their tall, stiff, succulent stems give a polka-dot effect to the tall grass — white dottings on a green background. Here in the dense underwoods the wood-dove nests. Far away, mournful in the nooning, I heard her cooing.

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Here and there in the hollows of the woods stout and stocky toadstools, marble-gray and white, look like so

many tents, or temples, that the imps of the moon and the starlight have raised. In the shadows, along the wood ways, damp and dumpy, fat and lean, white and yellow, terra-cotta and crimson, green and blue, poisonous looking, and, when not bloated, beautiful as strange blossoms are beautiful of the ranker weeds, pearl- and pink-gilled, slender or thick-stemmed, they orb their cones and discs — grotesque as the work of gnomes.

The Robin's-plantain lifts its lilac round of ray-flowers, looking down, like a yellow-pupiled eye, upon the snail that clings gnawing on a wild-rose near by, as melancholy clings gnawing at a heart. Suddenly I hear the Carolina wren singing in the top of a haw tree, " Cheer up, and cheer up, and cheer up! "

That trees have an intelligent as well as a sentient life to me is evident and provable. That plants have a sense perception of taste and feeling has been proven. If sense perception, why not thought perception as well? About a month ago, early in May, sitting under this oak on the top of Kenwood Hill, I conceived the idea of stripping the leaves from one of its branches and of seeing what within a month would happen. I carefully cut away every leaf at its base where attached to the twigs, doing no injury to the young acorns that were just forming. Returning to the same place a month thereafter I find that the bough has put forth new leaves — tenderly slender and palely delicate, invalid-looking leaves — smaller and less sturdy it is true than the ones which I removed, but leaves nevertheless. It is to me as if the tree had become conscious of

the bareness of this one bough, and the parent stem had corrected its condition, clothing it with green again.

Now the question that arises in my mind is — how did the tree *know* that this particular limb had been stripped of its leaves? It certainly must have known it or it never would have put forth new leaves again so early in the season. There must be some manner of intelligent communication between the outmost branches and the roots of the tree, its fibrous heart or brain or nervous centre, whatever you call it, that is capable of receiving information of, and then of remedying, some accidental defect, not vital, in its body. In fact I truly believe that trees are capable of thought the same as animals are, though, of course, in a lesser degree.

JUNE 22d, 1905.

Nature-Notes

Clothed in redundancy of bloom and beauty June meets me at every turn of this leafy lane, offering me now a spray of red half-ripe blackberries, now a handful of herbs mixed with the white ulms of the wild hydrangea, and now a double armful of elder blossoms, redolent of sun and rain and imprisoning within their starry stems a whole summer of hot perfume.

❋❋❋❋❋

The liquid note of the thrush — what words can describe it?
Above me now I hear it, dropping its globéd harmony,
Golden-bubbled, crystalline clear, indescribably deep.
Questioningly, answeringly its music falls,
Notes of antiphonal gold,
Full of youth and joy;
A tree-spirit, seemingly,
Voicing the innocence, the exuberance, the beauty of invisible,
Inviolable things; wild myths that populate

The world of the woods and streams.
Pensively, hopefully now it pleads,
Pleads for the dreams that haunt the hearts
of the trees,
The soul of the woodland —
Dreams that it sees from its leafy height,
Its breezy eyrie of green,
Dreams that it sees and knows.
And now for me its music, too, takes
form,
Visible, material form:
And I seem to see —
A presence, young with the youth that
never ages,
A Faun, a Spirit, slender and naked as
Spring,
Deep in the forest, approaching and now
retreating,
Blowing his flute of flowers,
Gleaming, vanishing far in the verdurous
glooms:
A Spirit, happy with all that is happy,
Communicated joy of all that is beauty,
The wild, wild beauty it drew from the
breasts of its mother,
Its beautiful mother, Nature:
A phantom supernal in loveliness, respon-
sive and tender,

Diaphanous, hyaline, translucently green and golden,
Golden and green like the sound of a thrush's fluting:
A form of light like that which shimmers and shades
Under the day-deep boughs of the myriad beeches;
Flitting, wavering now like a joy that dances,
Silent, alone in the heart of the forest,
Shimmering, glimmering here like the ray that stars the ripples,
Sun-speared, flashing and fading on woodland waters,
Falling, calling, foamy-lipped, like a Naiad,
Lost in the leaves, the remotest deeps of the forest.
Like the rain that tips the point of a poplar leaf,
Trembling, a liquid star, to its twinkling fall,
There it glances and glints, tinkling with silver the silence;
There it hazes like heat that haunts the summer meadows,

To whose kisses the wildflowers open their
wondering and fragrant eyes:
A glimmering form it leads me, musical
ever of motion,
From wildwood place to place,
Retreating, advancing, luring from vista
to vista,
Far and far in the forest, the haunted
deeps of the forest,
To slay me there, perhaps, at last,
At last with some last, long and lovelier
note,
Ringing as gold
And deeper in magic than the myths of
old.

❋❋❋❋❋

The milkweed's ball of lilac-colored blossoms swings, heavy with the wet, by the wayside. In it a striped beetle burrows, drunken with the honeyed perfume that filters from its hundred mouths of nectar.

Guidons of fairy cavalry, slender gold and emerald and azure, the dragon-flies twinkle hither and thither or rest alert of wing on the wild-flag

blades that rim, as it were with an abatis of green swords, the woodland water, the way to which is literally lost in and overwhelmed with the bugled stalks of the jewelweed or touch-me-not.

A wood-thrush flutes overhead. And again I think — all the sweet words in the world married to melody by the greatest musical genius could not express to me what its few simple but inspired notes express — of expectation, of woodland mystery, dreams, and wonder-visions never to be seen, remote, unattainably beautiful. — O indescribable song of the thrush! O June! O love! O youth! of you, of you it speaks to me! and of the lost, the irremediable; the indescribably fair and far and yet to be found, the mysteriously hidden, the undiscoverable, calling me in the voice of all my longings through the cadenced aisles of the forest.

Crystal gleaming, quicksilver-sparkling brilliants, moonbeam jewels for sylvan spirits to braid in their bark-brown tresses, or string in starry carcanets of liquid spar around their throats of wildflower whiteness, are the drops of rounded rain caught and held in the green hollows of the leaves that the rays of the afternoon sun love to linger upon, impregnating them with cool white fires.

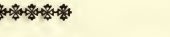
Already are the burning bushes (the running euonymus) covered with little round warty capsules of beryl-green that in September shall astonish this path with color—glowing into ruby and rose, making a diminutive sunset of fragmentary scarlet under the dark vault of tangled thorns and limbs of unescapable beeches.

The woodpecker! hear him, the red-capped,
Driving home his bill!
Driving deliberately home his bill
In the top limb of yonder tree.
Swiftly, instantly, repeatedly it sounds,
Resonant, distinct in the hollow wood. —
What a prospect from such an outlook,
What a world of limb and leaf,
Ever moving, restless in its rest,
Must that be from where he raps!
That tallest giant of them all,
That poplar there
Where so unconcernedly he clings.
What exultation of height!
What intoxication of cloud and sky!
Of wind and rapture in the blowing hair of the tree!
Its rocking and nodding head! —
Oh, that I too had wings!

The crawfish in his tower of ooze and clay —
What knows he of the day!
Like some crabb'd misanthrope,
Sans joy, sans hope,

He sits within his pit
Seeing no part of heaven, that azures over
it.

The lizard streaks itself from view, swiftly — a noise of clutching and hurrying claws, — around the dark-gray trunk of the oak; bark-colored itself, it is hardly distinguishable from the lichens that scrawl curiously with wandering hieroglyphics the sunless side on which it hides.



Hag-tapers bow their heads i' the wind
Like candles the witches bear; and, thinned
As the moonlight is where a soul has
sinned,
Their blossoms look; and a flower red
Blooms near them, shaped like a viper's
head,
A blood-blotched flower, like a symbol
pinned
To the breast of a gipsy dagger-dead,
A damsel frail as a flower, oh!

Nature-Notes

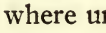
June 29th, 1905. Here late in June bloom the black cohosh and the butterfly-weed: the one holding high its plumes of snowy-white, like some champion of the woods; the other, umbels of flame, splashing as with battle-stains the open vistas of the trees.

The blue-black wasp, black-winged, its two orange-bright feathers flying from its head, dashes swiftly by — a fairy courier bearing dispatches from Mab to Oberon: alert, undelaying, fearless, his dagger ever ready, he proceeds determinedly upon his way.

Some snakes are beautiful, others, hideous; I have met with both kinds, never molesting them if they exhibited no signs of a desire to molest me. How fearfully some of them are fashioned; this one, for instance, which I have just crushed with a stone, short, darkly diamonded, that,

with its spreading neck and head,
gave me such a start a moment ago.

Here where the twilight-colored trunks of
trees,
Mottled with lichen, arch the twilight
way,
Where every crooked bough, swayed by
the breeze,
Now seems a knotted serpent, viperous
gray,
Because of one whose flat and horrible
head,
Reared in my woodland way, I crushed
to-day,
Fanging with poison its own side instead
Of me advancing where unseen it lay.



The purple racemes of the blazing star and the cobalt corymbs of the ironweed are torches in the train of Summer advancing over the hills. The huckleberries are spilling their fullness at her feet; and the blackberries and wild plums heap her path

with ripening abundance. Old Earth, in fact, is trying herself again in flowers and fruit, and the world is a very pleasant place to be in. It is of very little consequence what we have to eat, or whether we have too little or enough or too much, so long as we have many beautiful things to look upon. I don't know any better philosophy than this.

❁❁❁❁❁

Silvered with sun and rain the hills and vales,
O'er which a ragged rim of thunder trails,
Show like some lunar landscape, pearl and frost,
Crystaled with moon-dust and with star-drift crossed,
Misted of silver and in silver lost.

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Elderberries are now ripe; hanging in huge clusters of polished purple by the roadside and along the sumach brake from which the brick-colored

plumes of the sumach are thrust. Where are the snows, the fragrant snows, that weighed with odorous white each elder-bush but yesterday? Surely it seems but yesterday that I passed this way and stopped a moment to gather a spray from the masses that banked this lane.

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August 10th. The large golden touch-me-not, blunt-spurred and lemon-yellow, and the tall blue bell-flower, bluebell blue, make a wilderness of color on the shady hillside, — changing kaleidoscopic with the seasons, — leading precipitately over rocks and roots to the creek that, swollen clay-red with last night's rain, and haunted of the kingfisher and the small green heron, flows slowly, sluggishly along, heavy with soil, as a life with sins, between its weedy and sycamore banks. There

is a warm, damp, green, forest odor of wet earth and leaves and weeds everywhere, and the path along the stream is lost in the dense, high, succulent stalks of the jewelweed hung with its orange-colored, red-freckled horns, brimming with rain — veritable vats of wild-honey for the bees and butterflies to drown themselves in.

Cleared of woodland, the hot hill-side here is covered with the blossoms of the wild-bean; their puckered pink, dotting thickly the thin, pale grass and broom-sedge, gives the hill-side the appearance of being spread with an old-fashioned, single-patterned quilt of gigantic proportions.

To-day a month ago,— August 14th, — I gathered and enjoyed the first huckleberries of the season. The bushes are still freighted purple

with them, purpler and larger and sweeter than those of a month ago. To-day also I gathered luscious handfuls of wild blackberries in the wood-ways, along the roadside. It seems rather late for berries such as the huckleberry and the blackberry now that pawpaws are beginning to mellow and the Chickasaw plums to redden and Summer is preparing to bid us good-by.

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On the hilltop, no possible pool or creek in the vicinity from which they might have strayed to their death, I find the road, for the distance of many yards, strewn with the dead bodies of a number of small frogs — not toads — but small green frogs. Can it be that they fell with this morning's heavy rain? that, as I have often heard but never believed, here has taken place a peculiar, an un-

usual phenomenon, which scarcely seems credible?

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Already are the seeds in the green, burred pods of the strawberry-bush orange-colored; each one plumply packed in its own little corner, closely together, snugly awaiting the fogs and frosts of fall that shall split and divide the gnarly capsule, curling and peeling it and laying bare the rounded scarlet of its contents. Seeds that shall glow vermilion with the approach of Autumn, while the pods crimson gradually, rosily as September drowses on towards October.

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The prim, white spikes of the lady's-tresses, twisted and curled as if blown by the wind, are slender tapers in the wild procession, bannered with gold and purple, of blossoming weeds, that crowds and caval-

cades the briery banks of the branch that twinkles and pearls under the overhanging roots of a chestnut tree whose green and thorny burrs already begin to strew the gravel and grass at its foot.

The haw, too, ruddying its round and clustered globes, against the dark green background of the forest, looks like a huge bunch of holly, emerald dotted with ruby, that the Forest Folk have placed, in celebration of some festivity, at the entrance to the wood.

August 23d. Thrust over a tangle of blackberry and green-brier the spiraled spikes of the false dragonhead, or obedient plant, deeply heliotrope, with foxglove-shaped blossoms, arrest my gaze. Each blossom is a rosy mouth of honey, — its lower lip and its throat freckled and

streaked with purplish pink, — on which the bees kiss themselves to sleep, drowsily rumbling all the while.

I don't know of any flower more distinguished looking, more elegantly splendid, ardent with the ardor that burns and beats in the amorous veins of mid-August, and warm with the warmth of her own glowing bosom, than is this flower, the false dragon-head, that in a riot of richly blossoming weeds, — goldenrod, blazing-star, and trumpet weed, — the roving eye singles out as one might a plumed and silken prince amid his suite, magnificent with velvet and vair, of superbly-attired attendants.

The flowering spurge, with its masses of myosotis-like calyces, starry-white, makes miniature Milky Ways here and there in the summer

fields, quivering with the visible heat. Scattered 'mid the larger pink blossoms of the Bouncing-Bet, a strayed cluster of this euphorbia glints and glimmers now and then like the nebula in Lyra, lost in a firmament of weeds and flowers.

The curious, clay-colored mole-cricket, with its little paw-like claws pushing its stealthy way through the damp creek clay and sand, frequently fools me with its shrill, high cry, persistent, piercing, coming, seemingly, from no discoverable where. One would imagine that the earth through which it tunnels its narrow gallery would smother, or, at least, muffle the sound, but it does not. Shrill and distinct it rises in the summer silence, louder even than the twilight sound of its brother, the climbing cricket, whose wings vibrate pensively, plain-

tively, on the concealing side of a sassafras or green-brier leaf.

The old tree, on which the man was hanged, sighed to itself: —
"Alas! why am I made an instrument of violent death?
What have I done that I should be so punished?
Made a participant in such a crime?
I, whose life has evermore been one of peace and love:
Whose mind has ever been employed with thoughts of mercy:
Whose arms have always been stretched forth
In kindness and protection,
Sheltering the baby blossoms,
The shy, the tender, the timid,
The wild things of the woods,
That love to nestle and lie at my mossy foot:
I, whose limbs have unselfishly made,
Year after year,
A quiet cirque of coolth and comfort for the weary traveler,
Hot and dusty from the road,

Refreshing and restoring him with the soothing whisper,
The lullabying lilt of my leaves:
My verdurous bosom the home and haunt of unstudied song, —
Birds and breezes rejoicing in its sheltering and maternal amplitude.
Ah me! henceforward will Beauty and Love avoid me,
Frequent visitors before!
And Fear and Hate tenant in my boughs.
The Dryad, who dwelt in my heart,
Its beautiful and innocent inhabitant, is fled away.
No more will the loveliness of things within me and about me
Be as it was before.
Accursed am I among trees!
Accursed with the curse of murder!
The contact and contamination of crime!
Accursed with the stigma of slaughter!
And accursed shall I ever remain through the crime of man,
The most cruel, the most destructive, the most ferocious of all animals.
Would now that some devastating bolt,

Blindingly launched from yonder approaching cloud,
Might fell me, thunderingly, to earth!
Making me really that which I feel that I am become —
A horrible thing, twisted and gnarled and black,
Hideously crippled and scarred,
Blasted and branded, as the brow of Cain,
With withering, with elemental fire:
Laying me prone; or leaving a towering and tortured trunk,
A blackened shape,
In the shuddering and rejecting forest —
A trysting place for Murder,
A roost for obscene things,
Buzzards, carrion-crows, and owls."

❁❁❁❁❁

August 25th. In the sunny places, among the open fields, and along the dry banks of the weedy creeks, the wild senna, orbed and richly yellow, glows like spilled gold — doubloons scattered or lost by the marauder Month, each piece centred and stained

with red, spotted, as it were, with blood — the blood of wounded and dying Summer.

The stalk of the false Solomon's Seal is tipped and bent over by its bunch of currant-colored berries, a polished and glassy crimson. How bright they look held up or leaning from the masses of dark green undergrowth of the forest where there is no other sign of color to relieve the green except the ruddy horns of the touch-me-nots.

The woolly white of the boneset, heavy with dew; the fuzzy yellow of the goldenrod, drowsy with bees; and the ragged, butterfly-haunted purple of the ironweed, encumber the sun-tanned arms of late August as she makes her way slowly through brier and berry and thorn, burr and blossom and fungus, to the summer's close, the marigold garden where she shall deliver her burden with a sigh

to fruit-stained September and lay her down to sleep.

Where like an angry tyrant roars the sea,
Pulling his yeasty beard, upon his throne
Of iron crags; and where, like storm-lights strewn,
The baleful stars redden tempestuously,
I see him stand, blind Winter, all alone,
Wild hair and beard, like snow, about him blown.

What boots it to keep saying
That "life 's a hollow farce"?
That "men are fools"? that "praying
Helps not, nor doth remorse"?

What boots it to keep dwelling
On grief and sin and shame?
The old, old story telling,
"The end for all 's the same"?

Who says that He, the Power
That made us, as a rule
Made fools with farce for dower,
He only is the fool.

It is not very frequently that we find the Indian-pipe in this locality. But to-day I came upon it while walking along an abandoned wood-road and admiring the various colored fungi that dotted the wood and exuded from the boles and stumps of trees, such as the Cinnabar Fungus and the Sulphury Polypous, like an enormous yellow ruff. Among the many mushrooms I recognized the poisonous but beautiful Fly Aminita, gracefully poised on its slender stem, its top a lemon-yellow patched here and there with delicate white scales; the edible Chantarelle, of a uniform yolk-yellow color; the Green Russula and the Masked Tricholoma, pearly gray or brown, both of them snail-eaten and both of them esculents. In fact the chill mists and dews of late summer seemed to have summoned up from the earth all the grotesque forms that fancy dreams of, and scat-

tered them among the drowsy trees. Among them, solitary as a spirit among imps and gnomes, delicate, transparent, as it were of virgin alabaster, the Ghost-flower lifted up its fragile stem, its flower-head waxen white, bent as if in meditation or grief. It seemed to me the melancholy phantom of some sad wild-flower returned to earth to haunt the spot it had once bloomed in and to muse upon its past loveliness and happiness there.

The place was full of a pallid, a shadowy beauty; mossy and dark and silent save for the veery's occasional note, — remote and elusive as a note blown on a pipe by a young Faun in the green intricacies of the forest, — and the quiet, scarcely audible murmur of a stream, trickling thinly, as if afraid of its own sound, down dark rocks, dimly dripping, and under a bank brambled and

spired here and there with the tall, pink-flowered stalks of the horsemint where the sunlight faintly filtered through the thickly matted leaves. It was a place for wildwood ghosts and dreams, both of which I found, hidden from the eyes of men, — sweet, sorrowful ghosts that would not let me go.

The cardinal-flower's scarlet flashes and flames through the weeds and bushes, arresting the eye and holding it as a redbird might, suddenly alighting before one. Fierce as the fragment of some war-banner, bathed in the blood of battle, caught on the thorns and briers as it swept wildly by in onset or retreat, it flutters and flaunts, defiant to the end.

What is more divinely fragrant, more elusively fresh and cool and

morning-suggestive in aroma than is this September primrose, golden and moist as a streak of dawn, found blooming by this wooded brook among the jewelweeds and blackberry bushes? It reminds me, in its simple and solitary loveliness, with its clean, cool aroma, of a girl, a country maiden, primrose-fair, and fresh and sweet-smelling as her own old-fashioned garden dewy with the dewiness of the moon.

❁❁❁❁❁

Out of the arrow-heads, that thrust their broad leaf-blades, like so many halberts or glaives, from the pooled creek-water, the blue heron rises with a sharp, short, impatient cry, slowly and softly winging away, like some weird bird of our Fairy-story Days, some fairy guardian of a magic and haunted water, an enchanted damsel who takes the form

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of a water-lily at our approach, while the warden elf transforms himself into a bird.

Sept. 16th. Happening to glance up as I was musing along I saw what seemed to me scattered clusters of large ripe blackberries, glistening jet-like; but in place of the briers of the blackberry, I saw that these berries were held up on long, branched, smooth stems that shot up from broad-leafed lily blades. They were the podless seeds of the blackberry lily, that resemble so closely, in appearance only, the real blackberry that one unacquainted with the flower would, until plucked and tasted, mistake it for the blackberry.

Singly or thick-clustered, little, pointed rounds of ruby and polished agate, the berries of the dogwood red-

den, pointing with changeless flame, as flashes of fire might a great smoke, the dense green of its leaves. The roadway is scattered with their crimson. Nearby the wahoo's capsules, a rosy cinnabar, have opened, disclosing their vermilion seeds—seemingly the imprisoned carmine of the autumn sunset.

Not quite so conspicuous as the wahoo, the spice bush too bleeds with berries; their glistening red pungently aromatic to taste and smell; it does not permit the dogwood to outdo it in brightness of color.

Here and there in the moist, dark places of the beech wood the Indian-pipe, or Ghost-flower, lifts its frail, retiring stalk a few inches above the rotted damp leaves of last year. The stalks, at first ghostly in their whiteness, after a day or so turn a delicate

pink flaked and scaled with diaphanous white which is their leaves. Each blossom, which resembles a tightly wrapped rosebud, terminates the bended stalk, pale as a nun's face bowed in meditation or prayer above her rosary.

Under the old beech the clownish clumps of the beechdrops bristle, straggly and stiff, resembling wild wisps of coarse cow-colored hair, — tufts torn out and scattered to right and left by the wood-witches at their satanic orgies, celebrating their sabbatic rites when the storm was abroad and the horned owl hooted in the hollow tree and the fox barked near the blackened rock where they found the murdered man.

An iridescent, an indefinable blue, glitteringly metallic, was the little

lizard I saw to-day, slender and swift, all alert on the limb of a fallen tree in the deep woods. It reminded me of a jewel, a living gem, wonderful in workmanship, such as, I imagine, the wood-spirits wear in their green hair or at their throats of mushroom whiteness.

❁❁❁❁❁

Goldenrod, lobelia, ageratum, primrose and cardinal-flower lead down the bright battalions of their blossoms to the brookside, swarming its banks, rank upon rank, their glorious array mirrored and reflected in the smooth-flowing waters. Their plumed and bannered hosts startle and astonish the fields with a splendid, a mighty invasion — the fields that have not felt a plough for years. Now a chattering jay flashes above them, garrulous, jubilant, intoxicated with the sea of colors, itself a winged

blossom, a great lobelia, blue, freaked with white, endowed with a voice, and hurrahing its happiness to the sky and the trees.

The life-everlasting, grayish white, higher than the cardinal flower and lower than the boneset bloom, gives colorless tone to the wild fields thick with the rust-colored corymbs of the ironweeds, whose purple is almost departed now, so populous and imperial a few weeks ago, dominating the fallows. Its fragrance, quiet and unintrusive, scents with sadness and rest the idle fields, filling the heart with oldtime memories of happy places, country attics, ramshackle rafters, old, homely lofts of boyhood days on the farm, where the wasp and mud-dauber buzzed and built, and where were stored for winter use all the sunlight and warmth of the

summer fields in simples such as this, fragrant life-everlasting, and herbs and dried fruits of the garden; apple-scented places full of rustic peace and plenty where our boyhood passed like a dream.

The huge yellow spider, the writing-spider, in hot, weedy places, strident with the stinging music of the weed-bugs; and the corpulent red spider, with its big abdomen; and the angular black spider, ungainly and humped of back, enameled, as it were, with white, a porcelain-backed horror, spin their webs across the open paths of the woods, patiently awaiting the arrival of prey, some wood-fly, gnat, moth, wasp, or grasshopper, hurrying or lumbering blindly along that entangles itself in their nets.

How they remind me of that horrible humanity that lairs in our

large cities and spreads its snares for the destruction of the innocent, the unsuspecting! whose ruined or dead remnants are found lying in the street or in some alley-way, unrecognizable, by some early riser, as this insect, this burnished beetle is found by me stretched, a mere shell, in a corner of this web.

It is remarkable to see how the ox-eyed daisy still holds on. Here it is past the middle of September and I find it blooming, fresh of white and young of gold among the mist-flower, the life-everlasting, the false dragon-head, and the goldenrod — a starry stain in the richly embroidered apron of Fall, a pearly spot that will not out.

Until we meet again
  Heaven keep thee gay!
'Neath skies of sun or rain,
  Or gold or gray,
  Heaven keep thee gay.

Even as the sun-dial does,
  So let thy days
Record no hour that was
  Not full of rays,
Even as the sun-dial does.

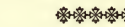
Where bloomed the rose but yesterday,
  Lamp upon lamp the hips burn red;
And one by one leaves float away,
  Red leaves dropped in the wood-stream's bed.

And now the spectres of the flowers
  Stream white across the stubble plains;
Ghosts, shaken from their wind-swept bowers,
  Of weeds that tangle all the lanes.

The partridge pipes; the blue-jays call;
  And caws the crow, that ribald bird:
The woods turn gold; the acorns fall;
  And all day long the hunt is heard.

A wood of thorns — thorn trees, thorn trees everywhere; low, dense, dwarfed, tall, scrawny trees, thrusting at you from every direction their murderous looking, formidable limbs and trunks armed with great pronged spikes and spurs. The wood to me seems as wild, forbidding and threatening as I imagine was the impenetrable and bristling brake of thorns that grew up around the Castle of the Sleeping Beauty. Here and there the sunlight strikes upon a thorn that is a part of this year's growth, and it stands out conspicuous crimson, transparent ruby; red as if dyed through and through with the blood of some gentle, slain thing — some hope, perhaps, that threading the forest, — endeavoring to penetrate its fastnesses to some far dream of love, lost, shut in, despairing of deliverance, within its savage and silent deeps, imprisoned and enchanted in

some horror of rock and weed and vine, — in the darkness and the storm had pierced its wild heart and breathed out its young life here.



The climbing cricket clings,
Moving its vibrant wings,
To some green brier amid the fields turned sere:
And to me, dreaming here,
Its plaintive music seems
An utterance of dreams
And it itself lute of the dying Year.

My soul is sick of many things,
But mainly of the word,
The word of hope day never brings;
That like some beautiful bird
Above me and beyond me wings,
Yet nevermore is heard.

Ah, not in vain
I see again
The roses ruined of the rain:

And in the mist
The amethyst
Of morning-glories wet and whist:

The moonflower bent
And torn and rent
That yestereve was redolent.

Back to my heart
They bring the smart
Of thoughts from which I can not
part.

Analogies
Of memories
That fall like rain on autumn leas.

Sad memories all,
Like rain, that fall
On joy, a rose wrecked by the wall.

❁❁❁❁❁

I came across a great, pulpy, green mushroom, the Green Russula, to-day among many fall fungi, — cupped and parasoled, red, slate-gray, white, and brown, — under the low boughs

of a beech in the rain-sodden woods. To its fluted underside, near its stem, two small gray snails were clinging, eating away for dear life: and to its top and about its rim, ragged with the gnawing of numerous insects, wood-ants and beetles, a slow slug lay gorging deliberately, like some fat, fairy Caliban.

The fungus seemed to me a great, green vegetable confection upon which these small fry of the forest were feasting. — Or was it a great table that the gnomes had wrought of mingled mist, rain, musk, and milk o' the moon, — a materialized fancy of Faery, — and laboriously lifted up from the earth to the monotonous music of the grig? A table which the elfins had spread with a forest feast, whose exhalations had saturated it through and through with fine flavors and savors, spilth of their imp-carousal, that left it a stained

and luscious morsel for the gnat and the ant, the snail, the slug and the beetle to batten upon.

❀❀❀❀❀

How Nature protects her insects, her bugs, her beetles, and her butterflies! painting their wings and bodies with hues hardly distinguishable from the earth, the rock, or the bark which they frequent or inhabit. This butterfly, for instance, softly opening and closing its wings on the gray trunk of this old oak. When closed, the protective coloring of the underside of its wings so confuses the eye that the insect is not detachable in color from the bark to which it clings, being dyed a soft, mottled gray, like that of the lichen that overspreads and spots the trunk of the tree. When open — what a revelation of dyes! it is as if the creature had doffed its Lenten habit for one of festival; had

unfolded its sober cloak, astonishing us with the richness of its lining, its under apparel, velvet and vair, revelations of ruddy seal and dim ermine: its body and the interior part of its wings furfine and downy, the color of rich old port wine, edged irregularly with a dim, soft gray, a lichen white, sprinkled with minute specks of dull gold and marked at regular intervals with orbs or ovals of a shadowy blue.

I have stood for half an hour absorbed upon its beauty; watching it slowly and gracefully opening and closing its wings. — What a wonderful piece of workmanship! And to think that this was once a worm! obscene and hideous, crawling and gorging itself upon every green thing in its hairy way! Now how it puts to scorn the beauty wrought of the labored Art of man! What a jewel, winged and living, for the Spirit of

Autumn to wear in her Romany hair or at her gipsy throat as she takes her way through the crimsoning woodlands to tryst with the quiet Spirit of Indian Summer!

❁❁❁❁❁

Wandering along a country road to-day, the middle of October, an unusual thing to see at this time of the year, was an apple tree in bloom. Dotted here and there over its almost entirely leafless branches, gnarled and dead in many places, freshened the pink and white tufts of the blossoms, — like love knots in the sober raiment of an old woman who was once a belle.

The old tree must have been dreaming of the spring and unconsciously put forth blossoms, expressions of its heart's deep yearnings, responsive and anticipatory, at the time when everything had ceased, or was ceasing, to bloom, and the Spirit

of Death instead of the Spirit of Birth was abroad in the world.

A thin fall rain,
Whose spite again
Whips wild the drizzled window-pane:

Through which I see
The blinded bee
Beat down and ended utterly:

The marigold
And zinnia old
Bent, wet, and wretched in the cold:

And all the bowers
Forlorn of flowers
As are the hopes which once were ours.

Ephemeral gold,
Deciduous emerald,
And crumbling ruby all the forests old
Fling to the shining wind, deep-rolled
Like some loud music through them:
Majestic music, sad and manifold,

The music of that ancient skald,
October called,
Who sits wild chanting to them.

❁❁❁❁❁

There is a sense of something unutterably sad, irretrievably lost, in the wind that sighs, and never ceases to sigh, in the fast-fading forests. I seem walking with some vast and ancient woe, some gigantic melancholy, invisible and swiftly moving, whose dark and mighty cloak sweeps stormily the boughs, shredding the leaves and hurling the acorns down.

❁❁❁❁❁

Oct. 23d. Two ragged, belated ox-eyed daisies, and a last pink plume of the dragonhead hold solitary flower-sway over the sere autumn fields, full of the ghosts of dead flowers; glinting and glimmering gray with the silken seeds and feathery wisps of the salmon-colored

broom-sedge and dead goldenrod; the wan, frost-nipped stars and tufted heads of the wild aster, and the woolly white tops of the life-everlasting.

Berries there are in abundance, purple and pink and crimson; orange and ruby and vermilion; cat-brier berries, a frosted damson blue; dogwood and spicewood berries, like polished carnelian; sumach and Hercules-club and hellebore berries, brick-dust color and mulberry black; buck-bush berries, cranberry or apple red; bittersweet berries, gold and scarlet glowing; running euonymus, or strawberry-bush, rose and crimson; and wahoo berries, mingling the cameo and crimson hues of stormy autumn sunsets and dawns.

❁❁❁❁❁

All around me in the wind-tossed woods patter the nuts; heard sud-

denly each nut is as startling as the fall of an unexpected footstep. Chestnut, acorn, hickory and beech nut, how they rain! shaken each one from its infirm hold by every breeze that sweeps the wood. Mast, with which the agile squirrel stores his winter granary, snug in the top of some old and hollow tree.

The birds seem to be all gone away; at least, if present, they are silent; all except two — the crow and the jay, who are never weary of cawing and screaming, making the woods noisy with their cries, the one trying to outdo the other in ridicule and vituperation.

In the underbrush, flitting secretly, silently, searching apparently for its mate, dead with the summer, I beheld a grosbeak, warm-looking in its plaid suit of brown and black and red and gray. Soundlessly it vanished, suddenly disappearing, visible a moment,

then gone in the hush of the autumn woods — was it a bird or only the ghost of one?

The scarlet and the gold and bronze,
The lemon, rose and gray,
The splendors that October dons,
Seen from this hilltop far away,
Like some wild bugle blast, far blown, —
The visible sound of something wild, unknown, —
Crimsonly calling, shake my blood that thrills;
Commanding me to follow
Beyond the farthest hills;
Exultantly to follow,
Through flaming holt and hollow,
Whereso their music wills;
The trumpet-pealing fires
Of trees and vines and briers,
Whose leaves like notes are falling,
The clarion color calling
My heart beyond the hills.

What is more startling than the unexpected explosion of a covey of

quail when one is walking and musing in the winter fields? thinking of nothing, or, if of anything, then of the difference between the appearance of the landscape now, bleak and bare and forbidding, and that which it was when these same birds were calling "bob-white" to one another in the same fields, full of flowers and sunlight and redolent with summer.

❁❁❁❁❁

The thin window-pane-like ice lacing and scaling the frozen wood-road ruts and the leaf-cramped streams and pools of the December woods, glimmeringly or glitteringly seen, glinting in the chilly winter sunlight, fills me with the fairy fancies of my boyhood, indefinable, almost forgotten memories of ice-maidens, elves and spirits, who, my childhood fancied, are busy all the winter night, by the light of the moon and the stars,

with the frost-furred window-panes of the farmhouse and the shallow forest streams and ponds; their noiseless fingers of icy crystal swiftly transforming them into sheets of ferned and flowered diamond and pearl.

❁❁❁❁❁

All day long the frost hoars the hillside here where the sun never strikes. Here, too, the shallow and sluggish water marbles bluely under the thin, frail ice of the frozen streamlet — changing constantly and slowly its visible form: liquid grotesques, flowing figurings of foam forming and fading away — phantoms of blue rain; shadowy shapes that inhabit the stream; constantly striving to free themselves, seemingly, from their dungeon of crystal; moving, Protean and fantastic in appearance, hither and thither, stealthily silent as if fearful of awaking him who never

sleeps, their hoary gaoler, the imprisoning, the unpersuadable Frost.

❁❁❁❁❁

Ochre-colored broom-sedge
Yellowing desolate ways,
Fields, the black thorns hedge,
Bleached with sodden strays,
Strays of leaves and flowers of dead, forgotten days.

❁❁❁❁❁

In the forest by the rain-wild creeks,
Where the wet wind fumbles in the boughs,
Rake the leaves away and, lo! the beaks
Of a myriad germs, beneath, that house:

Fingertips of gold and green and gray,
Tongues and fingertips of countless flowers,
Pointing us and telling us the way,
Path up which the Springtime leads her Hours:

At whose step awake the thousand pipes
Of the hylas, ere our eye perceives
In her cheeks the rose that morning stripes,
In her hair the gold of all the eves.

CATKINS

I

Misty are the far-off hills
And misty are the near;
Purple hazes dimly lie
Veiling hill and field and sky,
Marshes where the hylas cry,
Like a myriad bills
Piping, " Spring is here! "

II

A redbird flits,
Then sings and sits
And calls to his mate,
" She is late! she is late!
How long, how long must the woodland
wait
For its emerald plumes
And its jewelled blooms? —
She is late! she is late! "

Catkins

III

Along the stream,
A cloudy gleam,
The pussy-willows, tufted white,
Make of each tree a mighty light;
Pearl and silver and glimmering gray
They tassel the boughs of the willow way;
And as they swing they seem to say,
With mouths of bloom
And warm perfume: —

IV

"Awake! awake!
For young Spring's sake,
O little brown bees in hive and brake!
Awake! awake!
For sweet Spring's sake,
O butterflies whose wild wings ache
With colors rare
As flowers wear!
And hither, hither,
Before we wither!
Oh, come to us,
All amorous
With honey for your mouths to buss.

V

" Hearken! hearken! —
Last night we heard
A wondrous word:
When dusk did darken
The rain and the wind sat in these boughs,
As in a great and shadowy house.
At first we deemed
We only dreamed,
And then it seemed
We heard them whisper of things to be,
The wind and the rain in the willow tree,
A sweet, delicious conspiracy,
To take the world with witchery:
They talked of the fairy brotherhoods
Of blooms and blossoms and leaves and buds,
That ambushed under the winter mold
And under the bark of the forest old:
And they took our breath
With the shibboleth,
The secret word that casts off death,
That word of life no man may guess;
That wondrous word
Which we then heard,

That bids life rise
Beneath the skies;
Rise up and fill
Far wood and hill
With myriad hosts of loveliness,
Invading beauty that love shall bless.

VI

" Then in our ears,
Our woolly ears,
Our little ears of willow bloom,
Like wild perfume
We seemed to hear dim woodland cheers
Of hosts of flowers
That soon would run
Through fields and bowers,
And to the sun
Lift high their banners of blue and gold,
And storm the ways of the woodland old.

VII

" Awake! awake!
For young Spring's sake,
O hylas sleeping in marsh and lake!
Tune up your pipes and play, play, play!
Tune, tune your reeds in ooze and clay,

And pipe and sing
Till everything
Knows, gladly knows,
Sowing the rose,
The lily and rose,
With her breast blown bare
And the wind in her hair,
And the birds around her everywhere,
The Spring, the Spring,
The young witch Spring,
With lilt and laughter, and rain and ray,
Comes swiftly, wildly up this way."

ANNOUNCEMENT

The night is loud with reeds of rain
Rejoicing at my window-pane,
And murmuring, " Spring comes again! "

I hear the wind take up their song
And on the sky's vibrating gong
Beat out and roar it all night long.

Then waters, where they pour their might
In foam, halloo it down the night,
From vale to vale and height to height.

Announcement

And I thank God that down the deep
She comes, her ancient tryst to keep
With Earth again who wakes from sleep:

From death and sleep, that held her fast
So long, pale cerements round her cast,
Her penetential raiment vast.

Now, Lazarus-like, within her grave
She stirs, who hears the words that save,
The Christ-like words of wind and wave.

And, hearing, bids her soul prepare
The germs of blossoms in her there
To make her body sweet and fair;

To meet in manifest audience
The eyes of Spring, and reverence,
With beauty, God in soul and sense.

"The Wildwood Way"

"WHEN SPRING COMES DOWN THE WILDWOOD WAY"

When Spring comes down the wildwood way,
A crocus in her ear,
Sweet in her train, returned with May,
The Love of Yester-year
Will follow, carolling his lay,
His lyric lay,
Whose music she will hear.

The crowfoot in the grass shall glow,
And lamp his way with gold;
The snowdrop toss its bells of snow,
The bluebell's blue unfold,
To glad the path that Love shall go,
High-hearted go,
As often in the days of old.

The way he went when hope was keen,
Was high in girl and boy:
Before the sad world came between
Their young hearts and their joy:
Their hearts, that Love has still kept clean,
Kept whole and clean,
Through all the years' annoy.

How long it seems until the spring!
  Until his heart shall speak
To hers again, and make it sing,
  And with its great joy weak!
When on her hand he 'll place the ring,
    The wedding-ring,
  And kiss her mouth and cheek!

HILDA OF THE HILLSIDE

I

Who is she, like the spring, who comes
    down
From the hills to the smoke-huddled town?
  With her peach-petal face
  And her wildflower grace,
Bringing sunshine and gladness to each
    sorry place? —
  Her cheeks are twin buds o' the brier,
  Mixed fervors of snow and of fire;
  Her lips are the red
  Of a rose that is wed
To dew and aroma when dawn is o'erhead:
  Her eyes are twin bits o' the skies,
  Blue glimpses of Paradise;

Hilda of the Hillside

The strands of her hair
Are sunlight and air —
Herself is the argument that she is fair,
This girl with the dawn in her eyes.

II

If Herrick had looked on her face
His lyrics had learned a new grace:
Her face is a book
Where each laugh and each look,
Each smile is a lyric, more sweet than a brook:
Her words — they are birds that are heard
Singing low where the roses are stirred, —
The buds of her lips, —
Whence each of them slips
With music as soft as the fragrance that drips
From a dew-dreaming bloom; —
With their sound and perfume
Making all my glad heart a love-haunted room.

III

But she — she knows nothing of love!
She — she with the soul of a dove,
  Who dwells on the hills,
  Knowing naught of the ills
Of the vales, of the hearts that with pas-
    sion she fills:
  For whom all my soul
  Is a harp from which roll
The songs that she hears not, the voice of
    my love,
  This girl who goes singing above.

DAWN IN THE ALLEGHANIES

The waters leap,
The waters roar;
And on the shore
One sycamore
Stands, towering hoar.
The mountains heap
Gaunt pines and crags
That hoar-frost shags;
And, pierced with snags,
Like horns of stags,

Dawn in the Alleghanies

The water lags,
The water drags,
Where trees, like hags,
Lean from the steep.

The mist begins
To swirl; then spins
'Mid outs and ins
Of heights; and thins
Where the torrent dins;
And lost in sweep
Of its whiteness deep
The valleys sleep.

Now morning strikes
On wild rampikes
Of forest spikes,
And, down dim dykes
Of dawn, like sheep,
Scatters the mists,
And amethysts
With light, that twists,
And rifts that run
Azure with sun, —
Wild-whirled and spun, —
The foggy dun
O' the heavens deep.

Music

Look! how they keep
Majestic ward,
Gigantic guard!
And gaze, rock-browed,
Through mist and cloud!
Eternal, vast,
As ages past!
And seem to speak,
With peak on peak,
Of God! and see
Eternity!

MUSIC

Oh, let me die in Music's arms,
  Clasped by some milder melody
Than that which thrills with soft alarms
  The souls of Love and Ecstasy!
  Until the tired heart in me
    Is stilled of storms.

So let me die, a slave of slaves,
  Within her train of lyric gold:
Borne onward through her vasty caves
  Of harmony, that echo old
  With all our sad hearts hope and hold,
    And all life craves.

Music

Come with the pleasures dear to men
In one long Triumph! — what are they
Beside the one that sweeps us when
Her harp she smites? and far away
She bears us from the cares of day
Unto her glen?

Her hollow glen, where, like a star,
That, in deep heaven, thrills and throbs,
She sits, her wild harp heard afar,
Strung with the gold of grief that sobs,
And love that sighs, and, whispering,
robs
All life of jar.

Beneath her all-compelling eye
Our souls lie naked: nothing seems
That is: but that which is not, by
Her magic, lives: and all our dreams
Are real, and, clothed in heavenly
gleams,
Smile, leaning nigh.

The soul of love that can not die
Breathes on our eyelids starry fire;
And sorrow, with sweet lips that sigh,
Kisses our lips; and faith, the choir
Of all our hopes, its heart a lyre,
Goes singing by.

AUTUMN ETCHINGS

I

MORNING

Her rain-kissed face is fresh as rain,
  Is cool and fresh as a rain-wet leaf;
She glimmers at my window-pane,
    And all my grief
Becomes a feeble rushlight, seen no more
When the gold of her gown sweeps in my
    door.

II

FORENOON

Great blurs of woodland waved with wind;
  Gray paths, down which October came,
That now November's blasts have thinned
  And flecked with fiercer flame,
Are her delight. She loves to lie
Regarding with a gray-blue eye
The far-off hills that hold the sky:
And I — I lie and gaze with her

Autumn Etchings

Beyond the autumn woods and ways
Into the hope of coming days,
The spring that nothing shall deter,
That puts my soul in unison
With what 's to do and what is done.

III

NOON

Wild grapes that purple through
  Leaves that are golden;
Brush-fires that pillar blue
  Woods, that, enfolden
Deep in the haze of dreams,
  In resignation
Give themselves up, it seems,
  To divination:
Woods, that, ablaze with oak,
  That the crow flew in,
Gaze through the brushwood smoke
  On their own ruin,
And on the countenance of Death who stalks
  Amid their miles,
While to himself he talks
  And smiles:

Where, in their midst, Noon sits and holds
Communion with their grays and golds,
Transforming with her rays their golds
and grays,
And in my heart the memories of dead
days.

IV

AFTERNOON

Wrought-iron hues of blood and bronze,
Like some wild dawn's,
Make fierce each leafy spire
Of blackberry brier,
Where, through their thorny fire,
She goes, the Afternoon, from wood to
wood,
From crest to oak-crowned crest
Of the high hill-lands, where the Morning
stood
With rosy-ribboned breast.
Along the hills she takes the tangled path
Unto the quiet close of day,
Musing on what a lovely death she hath —
The unearthly golden beryl far away
Banding the gradual west,

Seen through cathedral columns of the pines
And minster naves of woodlands arched with vines;
The golden couch, spread of the setting sun,
For her to lie, and me to gaze, upon.

V

EVENING

The winds awake,
And, whispering, shake
The aster-flower whose doom is sealed;
The sumach-bloom
Bows down its plume;
And, — blossom-Bayard of the field, —
The chicory stout
To the winds' wild rout
Lifts up its ragged shield.
Low in the west the Evening shows
A ridge of rose;
And, stepping Earthward from the hills,
Where'er she goes
The cricket wakes, and all the silence spills
With reed-like music shaken from the weeds:

She takes my hand
And leads
Softly my soul into the Fairyland,
The wonder-world of gold and chrysolite,
She builds there at the haunted edge of night.

VI

NIGHT

Autumn woods the winds tramp down
Sowing acorns left and right,
Where, in rainy raiment, Night
Tiptoes, rustling wild her gown
Dripping in the moon's pale light,
In the moonlight wan that hurries
Trailing now a robe of cloud
Now of glimmer, ghostly browed,
Through the leaves whose wildness skurries,
And whose tatters swirl and swarm
Round her in her stormy starkness;
She who takes my heart that leaps,
That exults, and onward sweeps,
Like a red leaf in the darkness
And the tumult of the storm.

WOOD-WAYS

I

O roads, O paths, O ways that lead
Through woods where all the oak-trees bleed
With autumn! and the frosty reds
Of fallen leaves make whispering beds
For winds to toss and turn upon, —
Like restless Care that can not sleep, —
Beneath whose rustling tatters wan
The last wildflow'r is buried deep:
One way of all I love to wend,
That towards the golden sunset goes,
A way, o'er which the red leaf blows,
With an old gateway at its end,
Where Summer, that my soul o'erflows,
My summer of love, blooms like a wild-wood rose.

II

O winter ways, when spears of ice
Arm every bough! and in a vice
Of iron frost the streams are held;
When, where the deadened oak was felled

The Charcoal-Burner's Hut

For firewood, deep the snow and sleet, —
Where lone the muffled woodsmen toiled, —
Are trampled down by heavy feet,
And network of the frost is spoiled,
O road I love to take again! —
While gray the heaven sleets or snows, —
At whose far end, at twilight's close,
Glimmers an oldtime window-pane,
Where spring, that is my heart's repose,
My spring of love, like a great fire glows.

THE CHARCOAL-BURNER'S HUT

Deep in a valley, green with ancient beech,
And wandered through of one small, silent stream, —
Whose bear-grassed banks bristled with brush and burr,
Tick-trefoil and the thorny marigold,
Bush-clover and the wahoo, hung with pods,
And mass on mass of bugled jewelweed,
Horsemint and doddered ragweed, dense, unkempt, —
I came upon a charcoal-burner's hut,

The Charcoal-Burner's Hut

Abandoned and forgotten long ago;
His hut and weedy pit, where once the wood
Smouldered both day and night like some wild forge,
A wildwood forge, glaring as wild-cat eyes.
A mossy roof, black, fallen in decay,
And rotting logs, exuding sickly mold
And livid fungi, and the tottering wreck,
Rude remnants, of a chimney, clay and sticks,
Were all that now remained to say that once,
In time not so remote, one labored here,
Labored and lived, his world bound by these woods:
A solitary soul whose life was toil,
Toil, grimy and unlovely: sad, recluse,
A life, perhaps, that here went out alone,
Alone and unlamented.
Lost forever,
Haply, somewhere, in some far wilder spot,
Far in the forest, lone as was his life,
A grave, an isolated grave, may mark, —

The Charcoal-Burner's Hut

Tangled with cat-brier and the strawberry-bush, —
The place he lies in; undistinguishable
From the surrounding forest where the lynx
Whines in the moonlight and the she-fox whelps.
A life as some wood-fungus now forgotten:
The Indian-pipe, or ghost-flower, here that rises
And slowly rots away in autumn rains.
Or, it may be, a comrade carved a line
Of date and death on some old trunk of tree,
Whose letters long ago th' erasing rust
Of moss and gradual growth of drowsy years
Slowly obliterated: or, may be,
The rock, all rudely lettered, like his life,
Set up above him by some kindly hand,
A tree's great, grasping roots have overthrown,
Where lichens long ago effaced his name.

IN CLAY

Here went a horse with heavy laboring
stride
Along the woodland side;
Deep in the clay his iron hoof-marks show,
Patient and slow,
Where with his human burden yesterday
He passed this way.

Would that this wind that tramples 'round
me here,
Among the sad and sere
Of winter-weary forests, were a steed, —
Mighty indeed,
And tameless as the tempest of its pace, —
Upon whom man might place
The boundless burden of his mortal cares,
Life's griefs, despairs,
And ruined dreams that bow the spirit so!
And let him go
Bearing them far from the sad world, ah
me!
Leaving it free
As in that Age of Gold, of which men tell,
When Earth was glad and gods came here
to dwell.

Gray Skies

GRAY SKIES

It is not well
For me to dwell
On what upon that day befell,
On that dark day of fall befell;
When through the landscape, bowed and
bent,
With Love and Death I slowly went,
And wild rain swept the firmament.

Ah, Love that sighed!
Ah, Joy that died!
And Heart that humbled all its pride;
In vain that humbled all its pride!
The roses ruin and rot away
Upon your grave where grasses sway,
And all is dim, and all is gray.

SUNSET DREAMS

The moth and beetle wing about
The garden ways of other days;
Above the hills, a fiery shout
Of gold, the day dies slowly out,

Sunset Dreams

Like some wild blast a huntsman blows:
And o'er the hills my Fancy goes,
Following the sunset's golden call
Unto a vine-hung garden wall,
Where she awaits me in the gloom,
Between the lily and the rose,
With arms and lips of warm perfume,
The Dream of Love my Fancy knows.

The glow-worm and the firefly glow
Among the ways of bygone days;
A golden shaft shot from a bow
Of silver, star and moon swing low
Above the hills where twilight lies:
And o'er the hills my Longing flies,
Following the star's far, arrowed gold,
Unto a gate where, as of old,
She waits amid the rose and rue,
With star-bright hair and night-dark eyes,
The Dream, to whom my heart is true,
My Dream of Love that never dies.

MENDICANTS

Bleak, in dark rags of clouds, the day
begins,
That passed so splendidly but yesterday
Wrapped in magnificence of gold and gray.
And poppy and rose. Now, burdened as
with sins,
Their wildness clad in fogs, like coats of
skins,
Tattered and streaked with rain, gaunt,
clogged with clay,
The mendicant Hours take their sombre
way
Westward o'er Earth, to which no sunray
wins.
Their splashing sandals ooze; their foot-
steps drip,
Puddle and brim with moisture; their sad
hair
Is tagged with haggard drops, that with
their eyes'
Slow streams are blent; each sullen finger-
tip
Rivers; while 'round them, in the drenchéd
air,
Wearies the wind of their perpetual sighs.

WINTER RAIN

Wild clouds roll up, slag-dark and slaty gray,
And in the oaks the sere wind sobs and sighs,
Weird as a word a man before he dies
Mutters beneath his breath yet fears to say:
The rain drives down; and by each forest way
Each dead leaf drips, and murmurings arise
As of fantastic footsteps, — one who flies,
Whispering, — the dim eidolon of the day.
Now is the wood a place where phantoms house:
Around each tree wan ghosts of flowers crowd,
And spectres of sweet weeds that once were fair,
Rustling; and through the bleakness of bare boughs
A voice is heard, now low, now stormy loud,
As if the ghosts of all the leaves were there.

MARINERS

(Class Poem, Read June, 1886)

A beardless crew we launched our little boat;
Laughed at its lightness; joyed to see it float,
Veer in the wind, and, with the freshening gale,
Bend o'er the foaming prow the swollen sail.
No fears were ours within that stanch-built barque;
No fears were ours 'though all the west was dark,
And overhead were unknown stars; the ring
Of ocean sailless and no bird a-wing:
Yet there was light; radiance that dimmed the stars
Dancing like bubbles in Night's sapphire jars.
We knew not what: only adown the skies
A shape that led us, with sidereal eyes,

Brow-bound and shod with elemental fire,
Beckoning us onward like the god Desire.

Brisk blew the breeze; and through the starry gloam,
Flung from our prow, flew white the furrowed foam. —
Long, long we sailed; and now have reached our goal.
Come, let us rest us here and call the roll.
How few we are! Alas, alas, how few!
How many perished! Every storm that blew
Swept from our deck or from our staggering mast
Some well-loved comrade in the boiling vast.
Wildly we saw them sink beneath our prow,
Helpless to aid; pallid of face and brow,
Lost in the foam we saw them sink or fade
Beneath the tempest's rolling cannonade.
They sank; but where they sank, above the wave

Mariners

A corposant danced, a flame that marked
their grave;
And o'er the flame, whereon were fixed
our eyes,
An albatross, huge in volcanic skies.
They died; but not in vain their stubborn
strife,
The zeal that held them onward, great of
life:
They too are with us; they, in spite of
death,
Have reached here first. Upon our brows
their breath
Breathes softly, vaguely, sweetly as the
breeze
From isles of spice in summer-haunted seas.
From palaces and pinnacles of mist
The sunset builds in heaven's amethyst,
Beyond yon headland where the billows
break,
Perhaps they beckon now; the winds that
shake
These tamarisks, that never bowed to
storm,
Haply are but their voices filled with
charm
Bidding us rest from labor; toil no more;
Draw up our vessel on the happy shore;

And of the lotus of content and peace,
Growing far inland, eat, and never cease
To dream the dreams that keep the heart still young,
Hearing forever how the foam is flung
Beneath the cliff; forgetting all life's care;
Easing the soul of all its long despair.

Let us forget how once within that barque,
Like some swift eagle sweeping through the dark,
We weighed the sun; we weighed the farthest stars;
Traced the dim continents of fiery Mars;
Measured the vapory planets whose long run
Takes centuries to gird their glimmering sun:
Let us forget how oft the crystal mountains
Of the white moon we searched; and plumbed her fountains,
That hale the waters of the æonian deep
In ebb and flow, and in her power keep;
Let us remember her but as a gem,
A mighty pearl, placed in Night's anadem:

Mariners

Let us forget how once we pierced the flood,
Fathomed its groves of coral, red as blood,
Branching and blooming underneath our keel,
Through which like birds the nautilus and eel,
The rainbowed conch and irised fishes swept,
And where the sea-snake like a long weed slept.
Here let us dream our dreams: let Helen bare
Her white breast for us; and let Dido share
Her rich feast with us; or let Lalage
Laugh in our eyes as once, all lovingly,
She laughed for Flaccus. We are done with all
The lusts of life! its loves are ours. Let fall
The Catilines! the Cæsars! and in Gaul
Their legions perish! And let Phillip's son
In Ammon's desert die; and never a one
Lead back to Greece of all his conquering line
From gemmed Hydaspes.

Mariners

Here we set our shrine!
Here on this headland templed of God's peaks,
Where Beauty only to our worship speaks
Her mighty truths, gazing beyond the shore
Into the heart of God: her eyes a door
Wherethrough we see the dreams, the mysteries,
That grew to form in the Art that once was Greece:
Making them live once more for us, the shapes
That filled the woods, the mountains, and the capes
Of Hellas: Dryad, Oread, and Faun;
Naiad and Nereid, and all the hosts of Dawn.

WOMAN OR — WHAT?

"IT is a subject suited to the genius of the poet who wrote 'Bad Dreams,'" remarked the Professor as he abandoned himself wearily to the luxuriance of his armchair. What was there to be done? Absolutely nothing; and the fabric of the mystery accumulating around the letter and the lady began to occupy so great a portion of the gray matter of his brain that, instead of viewing the dream merely as a dream, he was almost persuaded to regard it, in connection with these other things, in the light of an actual occurrence, so vividly was it impressed upon his mind.

It might have been an hour, or only the fractional part of an hour,

that he sat there stolidly staring into vacancy, when with a "What can it mean? — Strange! — But this won't do! — I'll become as fantastic as night if I continue in this manner," he arose and lighting the gas, proceeded to the window. Drawing the heavy oriental curtains that during the daytime made perpetual twilight of the room, he stood looking out upon the deserted square. It was near midnight and late in August. The waning moon shone above the black roofs, subduing and softening all the ugly angles of the buildings into silvery blurs of shadow, and touching with pearl the tops of a few sickly maples that kept up a withered rustling under his window. Abruptly turning away from the serene sadness of the night, the Professor moved in the direction of his writing table, intending to obliterate the persistent sub-consciousness of the dream in a

practical appeal to a book and a pipe.

A great student of mental philosophy, it was difficult for him to deliberately relegate the analysis of his condition to that puzzling limbo wherein the uninitiated easily discard all visionary impressions. Although an able psychologist, he did not attain to this conclusion of mental agitation at one bound; it was a slow and gradual process assisted by numerous soporific puffs of the pipe and concentrated attention on the volume before him. At last he laid them aside, the degree of indifference desired having been attained. He was about to retire, to drown in sleep whatever speculations his fancy might conjure up again, when his eye lighted upon a manuscript translation he had been engaged upon for the past several days.

It was late, but he could not resist taking the writing up and glancing

over it now that it was completed. He did not care to compare it with the original German scrawl, with its angular and distorted letters in faded ink and its ragged and bewildering blots, that, after infinite application, he had succeeded in deciphering. He was done with that. And now he felt a certain degree of satisfaction in looking upon the finished work as it confronted him with its new face, the familiar English one, which he had given it. His efforts had been rewarded by what appeared to be a disconnected legend, detached from a rich mass of now scattered, and perhaps lost, German folk-lore, relating to some remote ancestors on his father's side. He had expected something quite different from the final result of the writing when he undertook its translation.

The manuscript had been included among a lot of old papers, faded

almost beyond deciphering, of a grand-uncle of his, Herr Hermann, a bachelor and a misanthrope, who, recently dying, had left to the Professor, as sole heir and last scion of the once mighty House of Otto, the decrepit and partially ruined remains of an ancient castle on the Rhine, along with a musty bundle of yellow parchment manuscripts.

The knowledge of this hitherto unknown relationship, together with the importance of being sole representative of a powerful line of German pfalzgrafs — who in mediæval times had ruled the Rhine lands with a hand of iron — was very disturbing to the gentle-minded professor. He immediately busied himself with investigating the authenticity of these new genealogical claims, and confirming the order of his descent. And so at last was established his right to the coat-of-arms, — which

he had always had stamped on his writing paper and envelopes as a mere matter of fashion, — consisting of three spiked bludgeons, argent on a field sable, cresting which, above a wreath of golden thistle, shone out a blood-red gauntlet. He could not say that he was proud of being the descendant of so wicked a line of feudal counts and viscounts, or of the legacy of the tottering and tumbling castle, litigation had about stripped to a kreutzer's worth of antique finery and furniture. His coat-of-arms was useful to him; his castle was not. The one was an everyday visual demonstration; the other merely a visionary expectation appertaining more to the past than to the present. Both were curious, likewise interesting to him as directly relating to himself and as being identified with his name and blood. Yet he, in this new country, speaking a different lan-

guage, living such a different life, seemed so far removed, so remote from all that they suggested and symbolized, that it seemed impossible that it should be so, and also preposterous.

The translation of the manuscripts left him by Herr Hermann would have been a difficult task for even a native-born German scholar, how much more so for him, written as they were in an ancient, small, crabbed and aguish hand, hardly decipherable. As it was, after several days of vexatious vacillation between confirmations, doubts and guesses, the Professor had only been able to secure the following from the deplorable mass of obscurity:

"Pfalzgraf Otto, from whom the Hermanns are descended, was a man of ferocious and brutal nature. Not only did he delight in the torture and oppression of his peasantry and

people, but it was his boast that he could blaspheme God and His angels with impunity; that if there was a God why did He not protect the weak and innocent — to say nothing of resenting an insult to Himself? No! there was no God; and what the foolish people worshipped was merely a creation of the minds of the ignorant and licentious monks, of whom the Pope was the great arch-hypocrite and scoundrel. And as to the Bible — why, that was merely a fabrication of superstition of the Hebrews, identical with the similar mythologies of Greece and Italy. The Old Testament was the record of many myths; the New, of but one — Christ. Indeed, if Otto believed in anything it must have been Satan himself, with whom, it was whispered, he had struck up a contract, swearing cheek by jowl, for services received, one tempestuous night in

the Harz mountains, to be the Fiend's leal brother-in-arms in this world, and in case there did prove to be another, then forever after for all eternity.

"The liberty and license of his predatory retainers were limited only by his own. The goods of the husbandman, the wife and the daughter of the husbandman, were the ruffian sport of this despot and his butchers. Murder, fire, and rapine were the three croaking ravens that attended, as black familiars, the blacker banner of Graff von Otto when he led his bearded and beer-blown bullies, with curse and song, from the ponderous gates of the Schloss.

"It was by might alone that the Pfalzgraf had won three wives. These had all died suddenly when they had ceased to be pleasing to the fastidious monster, — in horrible agonies, it was affirmed by eye wit-

nesses, and while banqueting in the great hall. Graff von Otto had seen some younger, some more flaxen-haired fraülein who interested him more, pleased him more perhaps, than the present Pfalzgrafinn. His confidential servant had received secret orders — but who shall say how the terrible mistake was made of spicing the boiled wine of the last incumbent with wolf's-bane instead of sweet basil?

"It was in the year 14— that the Graff determined to take unto himself another wife, the fourth it is said, and this time his choice had fallen upon the daughter of the respectable burgermeister of Mühlhofen. He had only to make public his intention of interesting himself in the welfare of any maiden in the community and straightway, behold, all other suitors disappeared; some vanished mysteriously but utterly,

while others discreetly retired, generously leaving the field open to his worshipful possession, while the parents meekly and hastily arranged about the dowry. In this case, however, there were murmurs of disapproval, discontent, and even of resistance. For you must remember the villagers of Mühlhofen had the recent monstrous deaths of the Graff's former wives before them as an everlasting warning as to the probable fate that awaited any future successor. Moreover, this was the daughter of their beloved burgermeister; and a more beautiful and lovable damsel than she was not to be found in the Rheinpfalz.

"It came to pass that Otto and his robbers got wind of this disaffection of Mühlhofen, through spies some said, through his sworn friend and boon companion, the Fiend, others said. However it was, one after-

noon, with a volley of oaths, armed to the teeth, he and his desperadoes galloped thunderingly over the drawbridge of the Schloss down the winding road of rock and root, to wreak vengeance upon the unsuspecting burgers of Mühlhofen.

"'Not one rat of them shall escape! Fools and sots! I will reduce the place to a desert, roof and cellar, and make an owl's roost of it!'

"But in the decrees of destiny this was not to be. For as he rode breakneck, devil-may-care over stock and stone through the forest, that stretched its dark miles between his castle and the village, he happened to startle a wolf, snow-white, as it were a shaft of moonlight. Mühlhofen, burgers, and burgermeister were all forgotten in the excitement of the chase and the securing of such a quarry. He must have the skin of the white wolf to match the whiter

skin of his bride. In his eagerness the Pfalzgraf never once noticed that he at first had distanced and then completely lost his retinue of retainers. Not a solitary junker followed him. Blind to everything but the beast before him, onward he spurred, mad with the intoxication of pursuit, the wolf gleaming and bounding through the tangled and deepening vistas of the trees, now vanishing like a long ray of hurrying moonlight, now reappearing like a silvery shaft of shadow.

"At last the Graff was compelled to abandon his horse; and without even taking the trouble to tie him to some tree, eagerly continued the chase on foot among the wild rocks and matted roots of the forest. At last he came to a tar-black torrent that foamed darkly down savage and bewildering stones through fantastic and hideous foliage. Where the sul-

len water emptied itself into a dismal pool, covered with a sulphurous sort of scum and green and yellow duckweed, he saw what appeared to be the white wolf standing outlined against the sombre crimson of the west, seemingly awaiting him on a rock high above the sinister water. With a ferocious laugh of exultation, stumbling and clutching at the evil and hairy weeds and roots that covered the hillside and the rocks, Graff von Otto hurled himself awkwardly and heavily in his weight of armor, sword in hand, at the creature quietly awaiting him there above the stagnant pool.

"But what had become of the wolf? — *That* was no wolf that confronted him with burning gaze! but a woman, white as a star and with eyes of yellow fire, like lucid topazes, and hair as black as a stormy night. She looked at him steadily, and the

Pfalzgraf felt the very marrow of his bones and his heart's blood freezing, slowly freezing, beneath that cat-like gaze. Then she spoke; and the sound of her voice was as the sound of distant winds in the moonlit woods, mixed with the music of limpid waters falling over pebbles of spar into basins of crystal, and yet terrible as doom:

"'Blasphemer of God! behold in me the hereditary spirit of the House of Otto. I appear only to those who are about to perish violently. Farewell!' . . .

"It is said that many days elapsed before they found the body of the Pfalzgraf, bloated and blistered beyond recognition, tangled in his rusty mail, among the slime and oozy spawn and waterweeds of a forest pool."

. . . . .

The Professor laid aside the manuscript. The fact that he was the sole

descendant, the only surviving representative, of such a family was gruesome to him to say the least. Yet, repellant and attractive at the same time, he brooded over the idea with a fascination that he could not explain.

Again the insistent expression of the eyes of the lady of his dream occurred to him, and his mind would persist in associating that look with a certain passage in the manuscript. He understood it now, yes; but he must sleep and see how all this ratiocination bore the explanation in the rational light of morning. If he again received a letter, precisely similar to the two already received on the preceding mornings, and if the lady of his dreams of the two preceding nights again visited him to-night with the same peculiar look, then these, the lady and the letters, must be something more than mere coincidences.

It was three o'clock before he fell into a frail, uneasy slumber, wherein Graff von Otto and his bandit bravos played battledore and shuttlecock with milk-white wolves' heads and the glowing golden eyes of star-white women: that finally resolved themselves into the eyes of one woman, the woman of his dreams, who regarded him steadily and fearfully from a gradually decreasing distance.

The day was far advanced; indeed, the buhl clock on his mantel had chimed the hour of noon ere he arose. He had dreaded it as we dread the inevitable, but would have been disappointed, after having dreamed that dream again, had the letter not been there. There it was, however, characterized by its foreign-looking envelope of vivid yellow inclosing a slip of spotless paper, perfectly blank, and nothing more. Not a line. He curiously examined the address. It was

correct, and written in a fine, angular, female hand. The script was German, but the postmark was American — his own city's. Placing it in an inside pocket the Professor left his apartments; they seemed to compress and stifle his soul that seemed dilating and expanding beyond his comprehension and unto — what? He was as one dazed, wandering he knew not whither. Some mysterious influence seemed governing all his movements. He appeared to have no will of his own. Could it be that he was on the verge of some serious sickness, and did this persistent dream, always the same, never varying an iota in its strange details, indicate this? Were the letters merely illusions? At this thought mechanically he felt in his pocket, drew forth the letter that had arrived that morning and stared at it as at some curious and horrible thing, then slowly tore

it across, shredding it into small bits which he tossed into the street.

Now he would go into the country. There he would forget it all. In a long ramble dissipate this haunting thought, this nightmare which had made horror of three past days and nights. . . .

The electric lights had commenced to dot the evening glimmer as he returned on foot by an unfrequented way. He was in an unknown quarter of the town which had been his residence for twenty years; a quarter distinguished by nothing that he knew; its houses older than any he had ever seen in any other part of the city; most of them great, square, colonial-columned buildings sitting far back from the street each one in its grove of old trees. In the course of his saunter, curiosity led him into a quaint old cemetery with queer, gaunt tombstones and cellared vaults.

Rusty iron railings enclosed little squares of myrtled and mounded silence pathetic with tottering or fallen headstones. Here and there flat and lichened tombs covered and hid a sad handful of dust and remembrance. The fireflies were twinkling like elfin lanterns, or will-o'-the-wisps, up and down the plaintive vistas of elm and cedar and weeping willow. A pleasant feeling of melancholy, dreamy and undefined, pervaded the soul of the Professor as he strolled among the gray, neglected graves. He had forgotten entirely the disagreeable things that had impelled him away from the city at noon. The letter, the lady, even Herr Hermann and his unholy manuscript were completely forgotten. Absorbed upon the sorrowful beauty of the neglected place in which so strangely he found himself, he continued to wander among the tall weeds and flowers that had

overgrown all its walks. He had intended going in a quite different direction, but suddenly seemed compelled, by some strange power, in an opposite one from that he desired to take; and in a little while he found himself, like the poet in Ulalume, standing in the uncertain twilight before a "legended tomb," a looming and crumbling vault of mossy stone at the extreme western end of the cemetery.

Could he be mistaken? No, he was not. There under the sorrowful trees, near the ghostly entrance of the tomb, among a wilderness of weeds and roses and ruined headstones, wavered the white of a woman's dress. He had hardly recovered from his surprise, and, embarrassed,— for he was a very shy, retired man, — was about to turn away, when the wearer of the white dress came hastily and eagerly towards him. Stopping suddenly in front of him she regarded him fixedly

from head to foot as if desirous of identifying before addressing him.

He, by the fast-fading light of the west, dimly discerned that she was very beautiful and very pale. A large, foreign hat of some fleecy material, white and white-feathered, partially shaded her face, concealing her eyes completely. The grace and elegance of her form would have indicated her — from white-shawled shoulders to white-shod feet — a woman of distinction, even had it not been for the costly lace and lawn that hung like draperies of foam about her. One long, white-gloved hand held a white lace fan of wonderful workmanship. Extending the Professor her disengaged hand she said quietly, as if she had expected him, had known him for a long time, addressing him by name:

" You have kept me waiting. Why are you not more prompt with your

engagements? — Did you not receive my letters? or could you not find the place appointed?" — Here she broke into a little musical laugh that seemed familiar to him, but, after a hopeless effort to place it, he helplessly gave it up. For a moment he stood staring at her, unable to answer her fusillade of questions. Then before he could courteously reply, assuring her that she had made a mistake, that it was not he whom she had expected, she quietly took his arm, and leaning lightly upon it, said, "Let us walk in this direction;" indicating a long dark avenue of larch and elm trees, along which the gravestones glimmered like ghosts, and at whose far end, like a torch at the end of a cavern, glittered and hissed the globe of an electric light. After a pause she continued questioningly: "You are glad to see me? You do not object to walking with me?"

The Professor could only stammer a breathless reply in the affirmative and the negative to both her questions; but which one he said "yes" to, and which one he said "no" to, he could not for the life of him tell. He was so entirely under the sway of some strange influence that it seemed he had lost complete control of all his faculties, mental and physical, and possessed no preference that did not first defer to this woman's; no impulse that did not emanate from the dominating intentions of herself. He wondered if he had not fallen asleep and if he were not dreaming that strange dream again; dreaming as he had dreamed only last night; that dream which had so absorbed and possessed him for the past three days. Only how different was this woman from the supernatural creature of his dream, the stately, mournful beauty in trailing black! Here was coquet-

tish loveliness clad in happy white, defiant and yielding, compliant and resistant. He could see that her hair was intensely black, and from the glimpses now and then of the classic purity of her delicate cheek, chin, and throat, he suspicioned marvels of loveliness the darkness kept unrevealed.

They had almost reached the end of the avenue of trees, and the gate by the sexton's bell-hung, dilapidated, old brick cottage, and were passing under the electric light at the entrance to the cemetery, when she stopped, turned facing him, and suddenly looked up as if about to put a direct and abrupt question to him. In that moment he got a full view of her face and eyes — a face white as marble, and eyes, two lucid topazes, a luminous yellow.

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By MADISON CAWEIN

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IN calling attention to THE VALE OF TEMPE, we do so with the assurance that it is a volume of classic quality and on a level with some of the highest work of the nineteenth century. It has been commended in a very high quarter of cultivated taste and judgment, and has been emphasized in the reviews as of more than ordinary interest. We might point to individual poems of unquestionable beauty, but our purpose will be better served and our readers' confidence perhaps better secured if we quote the ripe critical opinion of the *Evening Post*, where the discoverable faults are as plainly pointed out as the generally high and exceptional quality of the work is plainly acknowledged.

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